

THE
PROPOSITIONS,

Which occasioned the late
Difference and Separation

IN THE
BAPTIST CHURCH
AT
WHITEHAVEN.

WITH A
COMMENT on the PROPOSITIONS,
By JOHN JOHNSON.

ALSO,
That COMMENT considered,
By JOHN HUDDLESTON,

To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Isa. viii. 20.

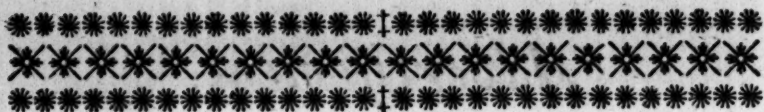
WHITEHAVEN:

Printed and sold by J. DUNN. Sold also by Messrs.
HAWES, CLARKE and COLLINS,
in Pater-noster-Row, London.
MDCCLXVI.



Advertisement.

THE author of the ensuing Propositions, after considering *the works of Mr. John Glas*, apprehended the faith of the church, of which he was a member, erroneous in some important points. This induced him to propose the Propositions to the church's consideration. The consequence of this proposal appears in the title page; and the four following letters will signify to the reader how the Propositions, &c. came to be made public.



LETTER, I.

S I R,

THE paper of which I here send you a copy I had from *Dublin*.-----It was transcribed from one written by your self to Mr. M.---Mention is made in the conclusion of a duplicate coming here; and I understand by a friend from *Newcastle* that another has been sent into that country.—This circular letter is, so far as I can learn, generally esteemed a pertinent and full answer to the *Propositions*-----; yet some few think otherwise, of whom I am one. * To us you appear an enemy to the faith and conduct of the first churches.-----For these reasons, and as your *replies* have circulated pretty extensively among your friends, I, at present, apprehend it necessary to publish some remarks on them.-----But it may be judged reasonable that you should have an opportunity of correcting your *replies* before they appear in print: For this purpose I send you an exact copy of the paper I had from *Dublin*: only I have left out the 4th. 6th. 7th. and 8th. Propositions, thinking, your
replies

replies to them may bear such a sense as coincides with my judgment. And I might also have dropt the 18th. on the same account. The 5th. Proposition is so corrupted, that the sense of the original article cannot be gathered from it. ————— If after your revival there be any alteration, you'll please to inclose me the paper again ; if not let me know.

I am, &c.

Whitehaven,

J. H.

August, 2d. 1765.



LETTER, II.

S I R,

YOur lines I received, and the contents have considered. And as you are so generous to inform me of your design, I think it is best to be serious, and consult in earnest, which way it may be done to the best purpose. The man that writes upon divine subjects with a righteous intention, contends not for victory but for truth ; and if himself is in a mistake, is willing his own mistakes may be discovered. The end is only to point out where the truth is, in as clear a light as we can ; that those who are attentive to know it, may

judge for themselves. I never expect the truth of Christ to meet with general approbation ; or that the religious world should either embrace or understand it : only to help some few, whose hearts the Lord shall be pleased to open, to attend to it.

Now observe, I had your articles at the second hand. And as I replied to them by letter, did not put them down verbatim as I had them : but, for sparing room, endeavoured to comprize the meaning in as few words as I could : so you say, one of them is corrupted.

Again, you had mine at second hand ; and I am not certain whether it be exact ; or whether it is the correctest of my letters : and you leave out several of the articles ; so it would only be a patch.-----I received three letters, all about the same time ; in each of which were some articles : but only one of them contained all the twenty-one. Therefore, as they were all relative to the same subject, I noted all the articles, in each of my answers : and tho' my replies might be to the same purpose, in each letter, the expressions are very different. Therefore to remark upon one of my letters, in such a broken manner, would be doing nothing.

I think this is the best way that I can propose ; viz. Please send me your twenty-one articles, writ by your own hand : and I will send you my replies to them, writ by my own hand.

I willingly comply with your proposal, am ready to conduce all I can, and as expeditiously as I can ; only let it be done to purpose. And when you have the articles

ticles and replies, before you, as I propose; the ground will be plain and open. We shall know what we have to do.

I am, &c.

Liverpool,

J. J.

August, 9th. 1765.



LETTER, III.

S I R,

A Ccording to your proposal I send you the twenty-one Propositions. Probably the sentiments might have been expressed in a less number;——In transcribing them, I have changed, expunged, and added words, as I saw convenient, for rendering the sense more clear. But the sense is the same, without alteration, in all the Propositions.——

I am, &c.

Whitehaven,

J. H.

August 22d. 1765.



LETTER, IV.

S I R,

THE twenty-one Propositions which were sent to me (supposed to be the sentiments of *Glas* and *Sandeman*, or taken from their writings) to which (at the desire of some of my friends) I had written replies.

replies ; a copy of which you have seen ; the same Propositions, in substance, I have now received from your own hand. But as you say, you have changed, expunged, and added words, as you saw convenient ; (which I suppose might be occasioned by seeing my *replies* ;) so it will naturally occasion a variation of expression in my present *comment* : as I have now to do with your articles, in the very sentences as you have stated them.—In my former notes, I had no design of contention ; but only for the satisfaction of those that sent the Propositions (or those for whose sake they were sent) to me. Nor yet, in this, have I any contentious design. Simple truth is all I desire. Yet I had not thought of attending to it in this way, only to oblige you. As you seem determined to oppose, in print, what I had written for private perusal ; I am willing to give you full scope ; that both you, and your readers, may see what I approve, and what I oppose, in your articles.——And I propose to be as explicit as I can with brevity ; and as brief as I can, with perspicuity. For I expect (if you persist in your resolution, to appear in print) you will not trouble the press for nothing ; but will publish your own Propositions, and my replies, verbatim. This is no more than strict justice : And it is all I desire from you,

Who am, &c.

Liverpool,
October, 26th, 1765.

J. J.

THE



THE PROPOSITIONS

Which
Occasioned the late
Difference and Separation
IN THE
BAPTIST CHURCH,
AT
WHITEHAVEN.



I.

THE Gospel revelation is generally esteemed, in it self, a *dead letter*; but it does not appear to be so, in any light wherein I can consider that expression; and how any person so esteeming the Gospel can be supposed a believer does not, to me, appear. *Rom. i. 16. John vi. 63. Heb. iv. 12. Phil. ii. 15, 16. John xii. 48. Psal. xxxvi. 9. xliii. 3. cxix. 130. Jer. xxiii. 29. Hos. vi. 5.*

B

II.

2 The PROPOSITIONS, &c.

II.

Precious *faith*, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, &c. is not any thing more, in it self, than believing the truth of the Gospel revelation ; and is most fitly illustrated, from natural things, by the belief of any common report from the evidence attending it. *Mark* xvi. 16. *Rom.* x. 9, 10, 16, 17. *Act* viii. 12, 37. *1 John* v. 1. *John* xx. 31. *1 Cor.* xv. 2, 11. *Act* xiii. 48. xxviii. 24. *Heb.* x. 39. xi. 1.

III.

Hope is the expectation which a believer has of being interested in the good things revealed in the Gospel. *Heb.* xi. 1. *Tit.* i. 2. iii. 7. *Col.* i. 23. *Eph.* iv. 4. *1 Cor.* xv. 19. *Rom.* v. 2.

IV.

Charity is love to and delight in the truth believed ; its author, institutions, and all who are of it. *1 Cor.* xiii.

V.

There are no works in a persons course of life, exercises of devotion, or dispositions of heart to be inforced or recommended, as preparatory to regeneration, or any way helpful to attain it. *Isa.* l. 41. *John* i. 13. *Rom.* ix. 16. *James* i. 18. Or, in other words, if a person be ever so industriously seeking peace with God, and laboring to make out his own safety, under the doubt of standing in a state of unregeneracy, finding no satisfactory relief from, simply, what is testified in the Scripture concerning Christ, then there is nothing to be administered from the Gospel for his comfort without perverting it. What seems necessary to be observed to
such

The PROPOSITIONS, &c. 3

such persons is, that success in their way is not to be expected but along with perfect rectitude of heart. See the xviii, and xxxiii, chapters of *Ezek.* compared with *Mat.* xix. 16---19. *Mark.* x. 17---19. *Luke* xviii. 18, 19, 20. x. 25---28. As to the relief of sinners utterly despairing of success attending any human effort for life; or those whose circumstances are already so bad, that every attempt to help themselves only involves them the more; all that can be done, or is necessary to be done, is to tell them the simple truth of the Gospel. See 1 *Pet.* i. 20---25. *Gal.* iii. 26. *Act.* xvi. 30, 31, 32. xiii. 38, 39. xxviii. 23. *Rom.* x. 6---9. *John*, chap. iii.

VI.

I know nothing about any principle of grace in believers, but what is imported in their name; viz. the word of the Gospel *being* and *abiding* in them, by its standing true in their consciences; according to *John* v. 24. xvii. 8, 14. 1 *John* ii. 14, 24.

VII.

The sanctification of believers, both as it relates to *guilt*, and to *evil dispositions* and *actions*, is by the word of truth, and not by any operation on their hearts separate therefrom. *John* xv. 3. xvii. 17, 19. *Eph.* v. 26, 27. *Acts* xv. 9. *Zech* xiii. 1. *Heb.* x. 22. Yet the influence of the spirit is manifest. 2 *Thes.* ii. 13. 1 *Pet.* i. 2. 1 *Thes.* i. 5. 1 *Cor.* vi 11.

4 The PROPOSITIONS, &c.

VIII.

There is no true joy in the heart of a christian but what exists there by the belief of the truth ; nor any increase of that joy but by a proportional increase of faith, hope and knowledge. Faith produces joy where ever it is. Faith and joy are inseparable. *Acts* ii. 41. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 37, 39. xvi. 34. *Mat.* xiii. 44. *Luke* ii. 10. *Psal.* lxxxix. 15. *Phil.* i. 25. *1 Pet.* i. 8. The christian's joy then comes only by the truth. Any suggestions a person may have made to his mind, concerning the safety of his state, his interest in Christ, &c. either, according to his apprehension, directly from the spirit (as some people express themselves) or by the medium of some text of Scripture, concerning which he has no true idea, as being little concerned about the mind and evidence of the Scripture, and as knowing little or nothing about the afflictions of the Gospel, and the christian labor of love, I say, such like intimations of safety, or interest in the divine favor, however plentifully experienced or joyfully related, are not to be considered as the proper evidences or genuine springs of the true christian's joy. Nay such impressions, what ever way they come, as yield confidence towards God, without conforming to the cross of Christ ; and which can be successively experienced, without the proofs of love to Christ's name by ministering to his saints, are to be ranked among the devices of the grand deceiver ; for as the saving truth has its influence, so also has the damning falshood, which operated in corrupting the christian profession from the beginning, thro' the agency of Satan, *2 Thes.* ii. 9----12.

IX.

The PROPOSITIONS, &c. 5

IX.

As the christian's joy has its existence from, and a dependence on, believing the truth ; so his growth in joy, confidence, and hope in the divine grace, has a DEPENDENCE on, and bears a proportion to, his love and obedience ; i. e. love to Christ's name and obedience to his new commandment. *John* xiv. 21, 23. xv. 9, 10, 11. Hope increases in suffering affliction and bearing the same with patience, loving the revealed character of God, maintaining good works, &c. *2 Cor.* i.

X.

A professor of the faith whose conscience does not condemn him, in a sober view of his heart, as being disaffected to the Gospel of salvation,—to the true God who laid down his life for sinners, or to those who are of the truth, notwithstanding his natural inclination to establish his own righteousness and despise the Gospel ; such a person has confidence towards God ;—as much confidence, as can be afforded from his heart, of his standing in the truth. *1 John* iii. 19, 20.

XI.

But conscience is but a single, and not infallible, witness : there may be reason to suspect it of partiality in ones own favor : so the assurance of hope is completed only by the testimony of the spirit : or it is only hereby that christians are crowned with such an enjoyment. Christians enjoying the assurance of hope have two witnesses, their conscience and the holy spirit, *Rom.* viii. 16. The latter does not bear witness, according to the above text, but in conjunction with the former ; and as the energy of the divine promise ; for he speaks not of himself. *John* xvi. 13, 14.

6 The PROPOSITIONS, &c.

XII.

As the spirit of truth does not bear witness to any works but such as are the genuine effects of true faith, or produced by the special influence of the Gospel; so the assurance of hope is not attained, neither has an abiding in any heart, without obedience and selfdenial; or the keeping of Christ's new commandment and crucifying the world with the affections and lusts. *Rom. viii. 17. Heb. vi. 10, 11. 2 Pet. i. 5—10. Eph. i. 13. iv. 30.*

XIII.

The painful fear of coming short, and joyful hope of attaining to rest and glory with Jesus at his coming, are two peculiar springs, or motives in a believer's heart unto all his warfare: till the former gives place to an abundant sense of the divine love by the Holy Ghost; *Rom. v. 5. 1 John iv. 17, 18. Heb. iii. 6, 14. 1 Pet. i. 13.* And the greatest assurance of hope does not set any christian above the fear of disobedience and its consequences from the divine justice; and so *fear of falling short* and *hope of attaining* are motives to the christian warfare till it is finished. Hereby he is preserved from drawing back to perdition. See *Heb. iv. 1. 1 Pet. i. 17. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Pro. xxviii. 14. Luk. xii. 5. Heb. xii. 28, 29. Phil. ii. 12.*

It may be here noted, that many persons, who are willing to venture largely on the score of their christianity, make use of their doctrine of perseverance to take off the force of the divine law in the conviction of sin; and when this is the case, they may be said to use it to their own destruction, as making it subservient to their
devoti-

devotional guesses and self confidence : this common sort of language, " The Lord has begun a work and I hope he will carry it on," is not to be regarded in the way it generally occurs.

XIV.

The churches of Christ have a plurality of elders or pastors when complete in their order. The churches who have them not, as seeing no necessity, are not such as the Apostles settled, for patterns of churches to the end of time.

We have no example of the *one pastor*, in a church, any where in the New Testament.

We have many instances of a *plurality* : as at *Jerusalem* *Act.* xi. 30. xv. 2, 6, 22, 23. and it was from this church that the christian law went forth to the nations, according to the promise, *Isa.* ii. 3. *Micah* iv. 2. We also find a plurality at *Antioch* (in *Syria*) *Act.* xiii. 1. at *Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch* (in *Pisidia*) *Act.* xiv. 20, 21, 22, 23. at *Ephesus*, *Act.* xx. 17, 28. At *Philippi*, *Phil.* i. 1. at *Thessalonica*, *1 Thes.* v. 12. Direction was given for a plurality at all the churches in *Crete* *Tit.* i. 5. *James* mentions the church and its elders, *Jam.* v. 14. *Peter* mentions the flock, and the elders taking the oversight of it, *1 Pet.* v. 2, 3. And it is no way difficult for those that can sit loose from their father's traditions, to perceive a plurality intended in the name *Angel* in the epistles to the churches in *Asia*, *Rev.* ii. 24. compared with *Act.* xx. 17. 28. *Rev.* ii. 1.

The nature and distinct parts of the elder's office require more than *one* to fill it, and not less than *three* to fill it completely, as appears from *Rom.* xii. 7, 8. See also *1 Tim.* v. 17. *Mat.* xviii, 20.

8 The PROPOSITIONS, &c.

XV.

Christ gave direction to his apostles about binding and loosing, *Mat.* xviii. 18, 19, 20, 21. And for this purpose he makes it necessary, that the church have *two* or *three* among them as a presbytery, which are mentioned distinct from the church: and without these *two* or *three* he does not give licence to proceed formally to such a work, or promise his presence in it.

I see nothing in the New Testament that serves to give any different view of the Lord's direction*.

XVI.

I cannot find any thing, in the apostle's writings to shew that a company of Christians are fitted for the business of eating the Lord's supper, without such an eldership.

XVII.

* The following extract of a letter, lately written to a friend, is inserted as an illustration of this article.

“ ——— *Mat.* xviii. 18, 19, 20. Christ is there on
 “ set purpose treating on that discipline which should
 “ take place in the churches, when they came to be
 “ settled by the ministry of the apostles; which was not
 “ to be till Himself was glorified. Compare *Luke* xxiv.
 “ 49. *Mat.* xxviii. 19, 20. *John* vii. 39. *Acts* chap. ii.
 “ His kingdom was not set up on earth, till He sat down
 “ on his throne in heaven; according to the prefigu-
 “ ration thereof in the kingdom of Judah. See *Psal.*
 “ ii. xxiv. lxxxix. cx. The keys of the kingdom of
 “ Heaven were promised to Peter: accordingly at the
 “ time appointed he opened it; first to the *Jews*, *Acts*
 “ chap. ii. and then to the *Gentiles* *Acts* chap. x. till
 “ which time there was not a Gospel church; and the
 “ discipline Christ taught his apostles could not be ex-
 “ ercised.

The PROPOSITIONS, &c. 9

XVII.

It appears to me, that eating the Lord's supper was the great thing in view in the ordinary assembling of the first churches ; and observed, at least, every Lord's day ; or with the same constancy as the apostles doctrine, fellowship, &c. *Act. ii. 42. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20.* This ordinance

“ excised. The apostles having received the Holy
 “ Ghost, according to the promise, were led into all
 “ truth, and qualified for planting churches and writing
 “ the New-Testament Scriptures ; having all the in-
 “ structions Christ left with them brought to their re-
 “ membrance, *John xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 13.* Such a
 “ church as the Lord proposes *Mat. xviii.* was to have
 “ the power of *binding*, or laying censures on incor-
 “ rigible offenders ; and of *loosing*, or taking off such
 “ censures and restoring to former favor. The binding
 “ and loosing of this church was to be ratified in hea-
 “ ven, in the mother church ;———where Jesus was
 “ to be on his throne, *Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 2, 23.*

“ This church on earth was to have *two or three*——
 “ gathered together, presiding therein ; without which
 “ presbytery we cannot know, from the Scripture, that
 “ they have such power. Such a church as this was at
 “ *Corinth* ; where Paul directs them to *bind* one that was
 “ called a brother, (*1 Cor. v.*) and deliver him so bound
 “ unto *Satan* ; reminding them of the power of the
 “ Lord Jesus Christ ; (i. e. referring to *Mat. xviii.*) and
 “ in his second epistle he directs them to *loose* him——
 “ having become penitent.”

“ Moreover, it is to be observed, that in this church
 “ there were to be *two or three* to appear as witnesses
 “ to confirm the offence ; where it was not publicly
 “ known ; as well as two or three to preside in the
 “ judg-

10 The PROPOSITIONS, &c.

ordinance also seems to have been attended to in the evening, about supper time, agreeable to its name and the time of its institution.

XVIII.

Washing one anothers feet was recommended by Jesus among his disciples, after his giving them an example, *John* xiii. 4—17. And this custom was observed among them accordingly after he left them, *1 Tim.* v. 10. and surely ought still to be attended to as often as there is occasion. Wheresoever the disciples of Christ are found, this practice should be found also.

XIX.

“ judgment. And further, the two or three presidents
 “ are not independent of the church, or lords over it :
 “ They are only agreeing together along with the bro-
 “ therhood, concerning the thing that is to be done of
 “ their Father in heaven ; but their agreement is essen-
 “ tial to the discipline. The Apostles having received
 “ their instructions from Christ, and having received
 “ the Holy Ghost to bring all things to their remem-
 “ brance and lead them into all truth, did accordingly
 “ ordain the *two* or *three* in all the churches :—elders
 “ in every church.”

“ The gloss which *Mat.* xviii. 20. generally receives
 “ about the presence of Christ being with two or three
 “ persons met together to worship him, is a trifling a-
 “ musement ; tho’ of considerable account with those
 “ who are in raptures with a kind of *love and presence*
 “ more philosophical than scriptural ; as to which, the
 “ proudest mortal may have the most plenteous enjoy-
 “ ment under the notion of deep humility ; but the joy
 “ which springs from the truth is another thing. ———
 “ This gloss I call a *trifling amusement*, because it tends
 “ to divert our attention from the genuine design and
 “ scope of the passage.”

XIX.

The kiss of charity is often enjoined. See *Rom.* xvi. 16. *1 Cor.* xvi. 20. *2 Cor.* xiii. 12. *1 Thes.* v. 26. *1 Pet.* v. 14. And it seems to have been practised by Jesus and his disciples *Mat.* xxvi. 49.

XX.

In the days of the apostles, the christians, as a token of their mutual familiarity, affection, joy, and regard for the poor brethren, stately feasted together, *Act.* ii. 46. *2 Pet.* ii. 13. *Jude.* 12. and on the same day they came together to eat the Lord's supper, *1 Cor.* xi. 21.

XXI.

Christ prohibited the laying up treasure on earth among his disciples, and enjoined alms-giving in opposition thereto; and what ever those who would be esteemed his followers and subjects may think of their religion which suffers them to trample on this law of the heavenly kingdom, under the shelter of their children's portions, sickness, old-age, &c. the New Testament ranks such persons among idolaters, i. e. worshippers of Mammon; as not trusting in the living God, who preserves and provides for all men, but especially the faithful. The following passages may be consulted on this head. *Luke* xii. 15—21, 23—37 xvi. 9—14. *Mat.* vi. 19—24. *Col.* iii. 5. *Eph.* v. 3. *1 Tim.* chap. vi. and iv. 10. *Heb.* xiii. 5.

A P P E N D I X.

Reading the scriptures is of as much necessity and importance in christian assemblies as preaching sermons; and as clearly enjoined by the apostles: *search their writings.*

Mr.

Mr. JOHNSON'S
C O M M E N T
On the foregoing
P R O P O S I T I O N S.

BEFORE I enter upon the particular Articles, I shall give some general Hints, by way of Introduction.—And as I find they are either expressed in the same Words, or conceived in the same Spirit, with Mr. *Sandeman's* Writings; I shall take Liberty, with Brevity and Plainness, to express some of my Thoughts concerning those Performances.

I read with pleasure some Part of the Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio; tho' I observed many Expressions which hung too loose, too straggling from the solid Foundation of Gospel Truth: Some Sentences very flat and dry; dashed with Legality, Tradition, and the Spirit of the World. But still, as his main Design seemed to be the magnifying of free Grace in Christ, I was willing to pass these Defects with Candour; being well assured, that Perfection is not to be expected in any human Composition.—Until Theron makes a Transition from an Opposer to an Enquirer; and Aspasio passes from a Disputant, and commences Guide. An Undertaking which discovered his want of spiritual Quali-

Qualification. For Aspasio appears as much bewildered in the latter End, as Theron did in the Beginning. So that, tho' I found many Things in the Dialogues well expressed, and many Objections well answered; yet, in the Whole, I think the Dialogues have a greater Tendency to lead Souls astray, than to instruct them into the true Knowledge of Jesus Christ.—And that it should be so, I never thought strange, since I understood who was the Author's chief Correspondent, about the Time that he finished those Dialogues.—Nor did I wonder, to find some Things crude and unfavoury in the Letters of Palæmon, after I observed the surprise he expresses, at the same Person, and his Followers: which intimates an extraordinary Expectation from thence. Pag. 448.

My Expectations were something raised, when I saw Palæmon, in his Letters, attempting to rectify the Defects of Aspasio. And seeming determined to avoid a Number of smooth beaten Paths, which appeared to have been the Occasion of Aspasio's Wandering.—As attempting to accommodate Christianity to high Life; and make it become fashionable.—Laying Baits to allure the Fancy, to engage Attention to Gospel Truth, by polite entertaining Conversation.———Raising high Encomiums upon celebrated Authors, setting them as Defences to the Oracles of God.—Paying great Deference to human Virtues, in Persons destitute of the Knowledge of Christ.—And lavishing out, that which the World calls Charity, upon every Appearance, or Pretence to Christianity; in Action, Word, or Inclination.

tion.—For where such Things as these prevail, it is impossible to retain the Truth, as it is in Jesus.

I also found Palæmon strongly asserting divers Truths, which are essential to the Life of the Christian's Character.—As, The Scripture Testimony, being the alone Directory ; excluding all human Tradition whatsoever.—The immutable Perfection of God ; without any Deviation, or Declension, in any Part of his Character ; his Counsel, Words, or Works.—The Invariableness of the divine Law ; and the impossibility of the least Mitigation.—That Christ is all in all ; admits no Competitor, but excludes all human Excellency.—And, that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth ; speaks only in the sacred Oracles, in Opposition to every imaginary enthusiastical Spirit.—And where these Things are maintained, in their true Light, without Variation ; the Truth of Christ cannot be subverted.—But I have a Right to adopt his own Words to Aspasio. “ You will not then think it strange, if, while I read forward, my Attention was chiefly awake to observe, if these Doctrines were justly stated, according to their primitive Simplicity.” But upon the most candid Perusal, I could not avoid taking up another of his Expressions ; respecting the Leaven which I have observed in the Writings of others ; “ In yours, I shall only say, I wish I had not found it at all.”

He seems to be well grounded in that which he calls his leading Principle ; and to defend it well. But I did not find any Thing in his whole Writings, that shews him to be deeply led into the Glories of the Gospel : or abundantly enlarged into the Mysteries of
God

God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Yet I confess, in his own peculiar Branch, or that which seems to be his Master-Piece ; His Talent is conspicuous : For carrying away the Rubbish ; gathering out the Weeds ; and burying the dead Men's Bones, of Tradition : or at least, for setting up Signs to discover them. *Ezek.* xxxix. 14, 15.

The Traditions of Men have spread themselves in the nominal Christian Church, like the Army of Gog upon the Mountains of Israel ; as a Storm, and as a Cloud covering the Land. This Smoke of the bottomless Pit, hath darkened the Sun and the Air ; until Men grope at noon Day, as in the Night ; or as those that have no Eyes. And this infernal Idol opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped : so that he, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. And gives such Life to his Worshippers, that they proclaim his Magnificence, as much as the Ephesians proclaimed that of their Goddess. Saying, who is like unto the Beast ? Who is able to make War with him ? All Denominations of Protestants (in the general Bulk) are as much biggotted to their own Traditions, as Papists to theirs. There may be some Difference between the Traditions which reign most in Britain, and those most in Vogue in Italy. But whether they be of the established Church, or Dissenters ; Tradition is the governing Principle. And each one having imbibed their own popular System, are devoted thereto, more than to the Word of the living God. And tho' they profess to make the Word of God their alone Rule ; yet, their Leaders have fol-

lowed the Opinions of one another, until their Sentiments pass for Oracles. And whosoever shall stand up for the sacred Word, in Opposition to their Traditions, shall straightway be esteemed Heterodox. And, either thro' Admiration of those famous Men, or thro' having those Things constantly sounded in their Ears; the People receive them as unquestionable Scripture Truths: tho' they never read them in the Bible.—Thus, the real Difference between a Papist, and a Protestant (in the common Run, of every Denomination) is only this; The Papist believes himself not obliged to pay Attention to the Scriptures, because his Priest tells him, The Judgment of the Church is sufficient. The Protestant receives human Teachings, as divine Truths; because his Minister tells him, They are taken from the Scriptures. And to plead the very Word of God, in Contradiction to these celebrated Protestant Divines, is as great a Profanation, as if it were done against a Conclave of Cardinals.—This Usurper, Human Tradition, is the most formidable Adversary against the Kingdom of Jesus, of any that bears a Banner in the Camp of Abaddon. And it is from this very Adversary, that every faithful Minister of Christ experiences the greatest Resistance in his Work: and every tender Lamb in Christ's Fold, finds the fiercest Opposition to his Establishment in the Truth.

I cannot esteem it Impiety, to lay open, in a just manner, the Delusion of any Doctrine that detracts from the Glory of God's Holy One: notwithstanding it necessarily exposes the Authors of such Doctrine. Paul withstood Peter to the Face.—There can be no Evil,
but

but what exists in some Creature. Sin is in the Sinner. Deceit in the Deceiver. Therefore we cannot oppose any false Doctrine, without opposing the Propagators of it. And if we must pay such Deference to Men's Characters, as not to stand up for Truth, for fear of exposing those reverend Names; it argues very little Faith in the beloved Son of God. Yet, he that does it, is certain to bear the Resentment of the devout Part of the World: and become the Object of Detestation, to Professors in general. But he that is so intent upon saving his Life, that he cannot risque his Reputation, for the Glory of his Lord; is sure to lose it. He that cannot bear to have his Name cast out as Evil, for the sake of Christ; but is ashamed of his Words before Men; of him will Jesus be ashamed, before his heavenly Father.—My Prayer is, That Success may attend the Endeavours of every one, whom God shall stir up, to jeopard his Life in the high Places of the Field; for the Overthrow of this Mystery of Iniquity. And may the Lord of Hosts give Commandment concerning it, That no more of it's Name be sown, in the Churches of the Saints!—In the World it is certain to prevail: it is it's own Province; and there it must reign; until the Lord shall consume it, with the Spirit of his Mouth; and destroy it, with the Brightness of his coming.

I was glad to find Palæmon advance in such an heroic manner; to form an Attack in Front, upon the confederate Armies of this enormous Devourer; this monstrous Idol, *Tradition*. And looking forward, in hopes to see a Josiah—I should have rejoiced, had I

found no Reason to suspect a Jehu : who acted valiantly, in destroying the Idols brought from foreign Nations ; but departed not from those, whom the Israelites themselves had invented, for their own Convenience. *2 King. x. 26—31.* Howbeit, this is not my present Concern ; only so far as I may observe any Thing in the Propositions before me, deviating from the Law of Truth, or the Truth of God.

I do not find any of the Propositions that touch upon the deep Foundation of Gospel Truth ; or that infinite Fulness of Christ, on which the Believer lives : The inexhaustible Streams of the eternal Fountain, or the pure River of Water of Life ; in it's Virtues, Excellencies, Glories, and Perfections ; which is the Life of all the Saints. Even those Articles which relate to spiritual Blessings, seem all to be superficial : not pointing to what Christ is, but to what the Soul experiences of Christ, in himself : rather the manner of Enjoyment, than the Thing to be enjoyed.—This is the common Noise of popular Preachers, and outward Professors ; to talk much about Experience, and Practice ; but without Life, for want of those heavenly Doctrines, from whence all spiritual Experience, and evangelical Works proceed.—Howbeit, As the Holy Ghost has left no Deficiency in his Word ; the grand Foundation ought first to be attended to ; and these Things, in their Order, not to be neglected : For, not only the Foundation, but whatsoever is built thereon, shall be revealed by that divine Fire, which shall try every Man's Work, of what sort it is. *1 Cor. iii. 13.* This Fire is the Word of Truth. *Isai. viii. 20.*

Some

Some of the Propositions respect the Commandments, and Ordinances of Christ, in his Church. To which, it becomes his Disciples to pay the utmost Regard; that they may understand, and observe all Things commanded, according to the Pattern. And we must remember, That the Son of God is faithful, both to him that appointed him, and to the Flock committed to his Care. He omitted nothing that was the Father's Will, or that could be for the Benefit of his Children: nor instituted any Thing superfluous. There is nothing enjoined but what hath it's special Usefulness; nor any Thing left in the Dark; but that his People may see the Certainty thereof: both as to it's being a Precept of the Lord; and it's End, and Use, for the edifying of his Saints.

And we ought to observe, That every divine Ordinance is positively commanded, and universally directed to all the Disciples: either by Christ himself, or by his Apostles, to whom he had committed Authority for that Purpose. And those Things which he did not give in exprefs Commandment from his own Lips, but left to his Apostles, were only such whose Usefulness could not appear, till Churches came to be settled. *Mat.* xxviii. 20. *Job.* xv. 14. *Act.* xvi. 4. 2 *Pet.* iii. 2.—It is therefore the indispenfible Duty of every Disciple of Jesus, to give earnest Heed, that he may neither neglect the Holy Commandments, nor increase their Number in his own Imagination; or add to the Words of the Lord, by forcing a Sense upon Things, which the Holy Ghost never intended. *Pfal.* cxix. 6. *Pro.* xxx. 6.

1. We must distinguish between standing Laws in the Church, and Directions given upon special Occasions. *Mat.* xvi. 20. *Luk.* xxii. 35, 36. *Act.* i. 4.

2. Between positive Institutions, or Commandments directly given in Form, in Words so punctual, as not to admit any doubtful, or various Construction; and general Instructions, delivered in the Course of Christ's Ministry: where one particular Act is expressed, when more is intended. *Mat.* v. 29, 30, 39. *Luk.* x. 37.

3. Between Admonitions to Things practicable, and Things spoken in Irony, to Adversaries. *Mat.* xii. 33. *Luk.* xvi. 9.

4. Between Things spoken categorical, and Things spoken metaphorical. *Mat.* vii. 6. *Luk.* xii. 35.

5. Between what the Apostles ordained as standing Rules, and what they ordered on circumstantial Occasions. *1 Cor.* xvi. 1, 2, 3.

6. Between Things commanded, and Things practised of free Choice: which are not binding to us: *Deut.* xxiii. 21, 22, 23. yet may be taken as Precedents, if we see Occasion. *Act.* ii. 44, 45. v. 4.

7. As all Institutions are intended purely for Edification; and no Edification is possible, further than the Mind is illuminated; We ought to learn the End and Use of every Ordinance, before we practise it: otherwise it is only Superstition. *Job.* iv. 22.

On the first Proposition.

THE Scriptures hereto annexed, prove the Gospel to be the Power of God. But the Word *Revelation*, in this Case, is ambiguous: by Reason that it is taken

taken in different Senses, by different Persons. Some take it simply, and honestly, for the *Truth revealed*: others sophistically amuse us, by telling us, The Revelation is not the Thing revealed: What is revealed is one Thing, and the revealing of that Thing is another. Others vainly jangle; as tho', whatever is ascribed to the Gospel of Christ, were ascribed to the Ink, Paper, &c. of which the Bible is composed, and whereby the Word of God is conveyed to our Hands. It is true, These Materials, as well as the Sound of the Minister's Voice, are, in themselves, destitute of Life. And where the Gospel of Christ comes in Word only, and not in the Power of the Holy Ghost, it is, to that Soul, only as a dead Letter, or an empty Sound: because of the Deadness of his Heart. The Truth, and the quickning Power thereof, entereth not into the Understanding; therefore it cannot give Life, where it hath no Place: or where the Spirit of Truth doth not give it Access, and a fixed Residence.

The Fact is this. The Truth, the Word, the Gospel of Christ, is not in any Sense, a dead Letter, in it self; but Spirit and Life. And is the very Thing which all the Children of God live upon. And he that does not see it, feel it, taste it, enjoy it, and know it, to be more than a dead Letter, in his Soul; is no Believer. *Jer.* xv. 16. *Luk.* xxiv. 32. *1 Thes.* ii. 13. *1 Pet.* ii. 2, 3. *1 John* i. 1. ii. 14, 21.

On the second Proposition.

The Scripture Quotations clearly shew, that Christ is to be received, and enjoyed, only by Faith. But the
Pro-

Proposition is ambiguous. The Words may be construed in such a Light, as that they will stand strictly true; but not a Reader in ten will put such a Construction on them: nor can it be certainly known, in what Strength of Light, the Author himself intended them.—If a Man, in his whole Heart, and his whole Soul, believes without reserve, the Sum and Substance of the Everlasting Gospel; in the Truth, Life, Spirit, and Power thereof; The Faith of God's Elect is no more. For this is nothing less than to have the Word of God dwelling in us: The Record which God gave of his Son, written in our Minds, by the Eternal Spirit: which is the same Thing, as, Christ dwelling in the Heart. *2 Cor.* iii. 3. *Eph.* iii. 17. *2 Job.* 2.—But how many are there (beside the Jews, *Job.* viii. 30, 44, 45. and the Samaritan Sorcerer, *Act.* viii. 13, 21.) who believe with (what is properly called) a speculative Faith; and yet are in Fact, Unbelievers? They are verily persuaded that the Scripture is a divine Revelation, that the Gospel is the Word of God; or at least they apprehend no Doubts concerning it: They will resolutely maintain, That all that is written therein, is the Truth of God: and profess to believe what is therein contained, concerning the Son of God. And hence they conclude, they believe the Truth of the Gospel Revelation. Tho' the Truth, as it is in Jesus, never entered their Hearts. *Job.* vi. 14, 36.

And it is not most fitly illustrated from natural Things, by the Belief of any common Report. For as I have only a common Concern in a common Report, I may receive it from a common Evidence: even such

as could not preponderate with me, if it were a Matter in which I were deeply interested. And however affecting the Circumstance, or however strong the Evidence may be ; so long as it comes only from fallible Creatures, it is still liable to be disputed : and if I hear a contrary Report, attended with some Shew of Evidence ; it may shake my Confidence. The Belief of earthly Things, is not properly of the same kind, as the Belief of heavenly Things. *Job. iii. 12.* I have no Right to believe a Creature, with any stronger Credence, than human Testimony can claim. *Rom. iii. 4.* The Things of the Kingdom of God are of infinite and eternal Consequence ; therefore cannot be believed, but upon Evidence which is absolutely infallible. Persons may pretend to believe those Things, which in themselves are divine Truth ; when this Belief is only grounded on human Testimony : received, *as the Word of Men.*—But this, which they call Faith, is no more than Opinion : and will vanish in Time of Trial.—The Faith of the Operation of God, of which Jesus is Author and Finisher ; is grounded on the infallible Truth of the living God, written in the Heart by the Finger of the eternal Spirit ; and can never be shaken, by any Thing within us, or without us ; visible, or invisible ; in Earth, or Hell ; in Time, or Eternity. Forasmuch as it is the Gift of God : whose Gifts are all without Repentance. *Eph. ii. 8. Rom. xi. 29.*—The common Rant of Ministers (under pretence of comforting the Weak ; and miserable Comforters they are) telling, of Persons believing, then disbelieving, and believing again ; Having Faith, losing it, and finding it again, &c. Is only a Delusion of the Devil,

Devil, to encourage Hypocrites by vain Deceit.—He that doubts the Truth of God, never did receive the divine Record. *Isa.* lix. 21. *Luk.* x. 42. *Joh.* vi. lxix. xvii. 8. 1 *Joh.* ii. 27.

On the third Proposition.

The Scripture Quotations subjoined do plainly shew, That Christians do enjoy a blessed Hope: and what that Hope is. But do not prove it to be what the Proposition asserts.—The Christian's Hope is not an Expectation of being interested in the Good Things revealed in the Gospel. It is the certain Expectation, of the Enjoyment of the Blessings, arising from the Assurance of our Interest therein, thro' our Relation to Christ. *Rom.* viii. 25. 2 *Tim.* i. 12. *Tit.* ii. 13. *Heb.* vi. 19.—I know, the Hope of the religious World, or the Body of carnal Professors, is, A vague Expectation (with a, *Who can tell*) That they may obtain an Interest in the Blessings of Grace, and escape the Wrath to come. But this is as foreign to the Hope of the real Christian, as Earth is from Heaven. 1 *Thes.* i. 10.

Hope is no other Thing than Faith, considered in a certain Branch, or Mode: that is, Faith in the Promise of God. When Faith and Hope are distinguished; then, by the former, we understand, Belief of the Truth, as it is in Jesus; and by the latter, Belief of his Promise to us. Now, the peculiar Promises of God, Promises of spiritual and eternal Blessings, are made only to Christ's Sheep. *Joh.* x. 26, 27, 28. And cannot possibly be appropriated by any, until they be manifestly the Children of God, by Faith. *Gal.* iii. 26. For it is impossible

impossible to hope for the Inheritance, unless we know our Relation, as Children. *Rom.* viii. 17. *Gal.* iv. 7.—The Soul believes on the Son of God, according to the divine Record. 1 *Job.* v. 11. He thereby becomes possessed of eternal Life. *Job.* v. 24. vi. 47. Enjoys Communion with God. 1 *Job.* i. 3. Partakes of the Blessings of the Gospel. *Eph.* i. 3. And hence he becomes assured of his Interest in the Mediator: and in all the Blessings of Grace and Glory, promised to the Saints. *Job.* vi. 40. 1 *Cor.* iii. 21, 22, 23. And of this strong Consolation, he cannot fail; being possessed of the Spirit of Adoption. *Rom.* viii. 15. *Gal.* iv. 6.—Therefore the Hope of a Believer, is, an unshaken Dependence on the infallible Promise of Jehovah. *Rom.* iv. 21. With a patient Waiting, and unwavering Expectation of the ample Completion of all the Grace, and perfect Consummation of all the Glory, promised to the Church of the First-Born. 1 *Job.* iii. 2. Nothing less than this is the Believer's Hope. *Rom.* v. 2. 2 *Thes.* ii. 16. *Heb.* xi. 1.

On the fourth Proposition.

I could very well acquiesce in what I conceive to be the Design of this Article; but it is so awkwardly put together, that I cannot say, I can form any certain Idea of the determinate Sense. In speaking of Charity, being Love to, and Delight in, *The Truth believed, its Author, &c.*—I very well know, That Charity and Love are Terms synonymous: only two Words derived from different Languages, whereby the self same Thing is expressed. I also know, That evangelical Charity is the pure Love of God, in Christ; shed abroad in the

D

Heart,

Heart, by the Holy Ghost. *Rom.* v. 5. Whereby the Soul is inspired to love him, above all Things. *Psal.* lxxiii. 25. 1 *Joh.* iv. 19. Which Love must of necessity extend to his Members, his Commandments, and whatsoever pertains to his Kingdom. 1 *Joh.* v. 1. 2, 3.—But, *Truth's Author*, I do not understand.—I know and love the Truth: which is the Three-One God: and who is himself, the Author of all Things. *Joh.* xvii. 3. 1 *Cor.* viii. 6. *Eph.* iv. 21. 1 *Joh.* v. 6.

On the fifth Proposition.

I have no Objection to the main Design of this Proposition. For I know, there can be no Work, Communication, or Blessing of Grace in any Soul; of which Christ is not Alpha and Omega. *Act.* iv. 12. *Jam.* i. 17. Nor does Christ convey the Blessings of Life, any other Way, but alone by the Gospel of the Grace of God. *Joh.* xvii. 17. *Phil.* ii. 16.—For tho' (as is tacitly hinted) There must of Necessity be a Communication of convincing Light, from the Law of God; to make the Soul despair of finding Life in himself; or from any Thing done by himself; and so to slay all his false Confidence; as we must needs die to ourselves, before we can live to God: *Rom.* vii. 9, 10, 11. 2 *Cor.* iii. 6. Being convinced of Sin: *Ezek.* xvi. 61, 63. *Act.* ix. 4. And of the Vanity of all our own Virtues, or Performances; to restore, or bring us to God: *Jer.* ii. 21. xvii. 1. *Rom.* iii. 20. That all false Hopes, and delusive Comforts, may be perfectly dissipated: *Isa.* lix. 6. lxiv. 6. *Mat.* v. 20. *Rom.* iii. 9—19. vii 18. Yet, allowing this to be a preparatory Work; it is not the Work of
the

the Creature, but the Work of God, to strike the Soul with a Sight of his perfect Majesty, and it's own Wretchedness. *Job.* xl. 2, 4, 5. *Isa.* vi. 5. Nor is the Soul hereby made any more Holy: only made to know his own Vileness: because this Operation is not by the Gospel, but by the Law. *Rom.* iv. 15. vii. 13. Neither is it possible to gather any solid Consolation from hence. The Sound is *Death.* *Hab.* iii. 16.

Regeneration is a Work peculiar to God alone, as he is the God of all Grace, the Fountain of living Waters. *Tit.* iii. 4, 5, 6. It is communicated by his omnipotent Word. *Jam.* i. 18. *1 Pet.* i. 23. (See *Job.* iii. v. Water, in this place, intends the Word of Truth.) And that Word proceeds from, and in, the Fulness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *Job.* xii. 49, 50. *1 Thes.* i. 5.—Hence, in Regeneration, or, being born again; Christ becomes the Soul's Life, by special divine Communication. *Gal.* i. 15, 16. And by Christ becoming his Life, the Man becomes a new Creature. *2 Cor.* v. 17. He enters into a new spiritual State: *Col.* i. 13. ii. 12, 13. And lives by Christ alone: *Job.* vi. 57. Or, lives by the Faith of the Son of God. *Gal.* ii. 20. *1 Job.* v. 12.

On the sixth Proposition.

I can only guess at the Intention of this Proposition, from the Scriptures annexed. For it is conceived in Terms so unintelligible, that I can neither gather any determinate Meaning, or make any just Reply: unless I must allow for some Errata of the Pen. And instead of, *Imported in their Name*, read, *Imparted in Christ's Name*: and instead of, *By it's standing true in their Con-*
D 2
sciences,

sciences, read, *By the Spirit of Truth manifesting it in their Consciences*. Or something like this.

As for the common Talk of Professors, about a Work of Grace, or a Principle of Grace in the Heart; It is my Judgment, that many of them (if closely interrogated) do not know what they mean themselves.—The Truth is this, Every spiritual Blessing of which the Saints are possessed, is Grace. 1 Cor. xv. 10. All Grace proceeds from Christ. Job. i. 16, 17. And all the Fulness of Christ is communicated by the Word of the Gospel. Eph. iii. 6.—So then, there can be no Grace, or spiritual Principle in any Soul, but one of these; viz. Either the Fulness of Christ; That is, Light, Truth, Life, Love, Power, Peace, Joy, &c. communicated immediately from himself; by the Word of Life, under the special Influence of the Spirit of Holiness; Or else, Grace, taken in the lower Sense; That is, those Streams, Productions, or Fruits of the Spirit, which naturally proceed from these divine Communications; or from the Fulness of Christ, enriching the Mind. Such as holy, heavenly, spiritual Dispositions of Soul; Desires after, Love to, and Delight in God; Humility, Gratitude, and Submission to the Will of God; Conformity to the Law of Christ, Love to the Saints, and Devotedness to the Glory of God, &c.—I say, All Grace, is either to be understood of the Fulness that is in Jesus; or the Effects produced thereby, in the Hearts of his Children. And so, no spiritual Principle exists in the Heart, separate from the Fulness that is in Christ. Job. xv. 5. Tho' the Streams may be distinguished from the Fountain; or the Fruits, from the Root that bears them. Gal. v. 22. 2 Pet. i. 5.

On the seventh Proposition.

The Scriptures hereto annexed, do fully prove, That the Sanctification of Believers is no other Thing than the Fulness of Christ, by the Word of Truth, thro' the Influence of the Spirit of Grace, communicated to the Heart.—A separate Operation is impossible.—There can be no Holiness, but what proceeds from the Holy One of God. And from Him, nothing can be received, but by the Light of his Word, in the Power of his Spirit. There never was a spiritual Operation, or heavenly Blessing bestowed, special Communion with God, or holy Inclination in any Soul; but what proceeded from the Father of Lights: *Job.* xvii. 7. Nothing ever proceeded from the Father, but in the Son: *Col.* i. 19. Nothing could come from Christ, to his Children, but by his Spirit: *Job.* xvi. 14, 15. Nothing ever was performed in any Soul, by the Spirit of Truth, but what was wrought by the Word of Grace. *Rom.* x. 14. *2 Tim.* iii. 15, 16. *2 Pet.* i. 21. The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit. *Eph.* vi. 17. The Sword makes no Impression without the mighty Arm, nor the Arm without the Sword. The Word is the live Coal that purges the Conscience; the Spirit is the Hand that conveys it. *Isa.* vi. 6. *Act.* x. 44.

Sanctification includes all the Nearness to God, all the Conformity to Christ, and all the Vivification of the Spirit, that any Soul is blessed with, or ever shall attain unto.—And whether we consider it in the Negative only; for removing Guilt, evil Inclinations, and sinful Conversation; or we take it in the Positive; for Illumination, Enlargement, Delight in God, or the

Soul being enriched with all the Blessedness, and filled with all the Fulness of God; It all proceeds from Emmanuel. *Heb. ii. 11.* And is communicated to God's Elect, by the Word of his Holiness. *Job. xvii. 26.*

On the eight Proposition.

The Scriptures refered to, do manifestly shew, That all true Joy springs from the Truth, as it is in Christ: and exists in the Heart thro' the Belief of that Truth, and no other Way. Nor can there be any Increase of that Joy, but in Proportion to the Increase of the Knowledge of Christ: whereby the Soul is established, and enlarged in Faith, Hope, and Love to the Lord Jesus. *Eph. iv. 13, 15.*—And certain it is, That all enthusiastical Suggestions, or Intimations of Safety, or Interest in the Grace of God; which are imagined to come directly from the Spirit; by some peculiar Sweetness of Frame, or transient Tranquility of Soul; some Raptures, Extacies, or uncommon Agitations of the Passions; some Expansions of the Mind, or enlarged Conceptions of heavenly Things; some sudden Occurrence of Texts of Scripture, or some gracious Promise to the Mind. &c. Such Things as these may proceed from a prolific Fancy, and Strength of Imagination. Therefore whenever Persons build their Confidence, and draw their Comfort from any Thing of the Kind; they are nothing else but Delusions of the Devil. *Mat. xxiv. 23—26.* *Luk. xvii. 20. 21.*—But be it noted, That a Person may be blessed with precious Faith, and heavenly Joy; such as is accompanied with Love to Christ, and Conformity to his Cross; who is not in a Capacity to
manifest

manifest it by ministering to the Saints : but may need to be ministered unto. *Act. vi. 1. Jam. ii. 15, 16. 1 Job. iii. 17.*

On the ninth Proposition.

It is an undeniable Truth, That the Christian's Joy has it's Existence alone in the Lord. *Neb. viii. 10. Psal. xliii. 4. Phil. iii. 3. iv. 4.* And it must be through believing, for it is impossible to have any Enjoyment of God, only by Faith. *Job. iii. 36.* And the Christian's Confidence and Hope has no other Existence : nor does it's Being, or it's Growth, depend on any other Thing : for the Believer knows no other Hope or Confidence, beside his God. *Psal. xviii. 1, 2, 3. Jer. xvii. 7. Col. i. 27. 1 Tim. i. 1.* Nor is there any Way of obtaining it, only as it is the Gift of God, by his special Word of Promise, to his Saints. *Zech. x. 12, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22, 23.*

The Texts quoted in the Proposition, do not prove, That the Christian's Growth in Confidence and Hope in the divine Grace, has a *Dependence* on his Love and Obedience. But both they, and many other Scriptures, do clearly point out, That Love to Christ, Obedience to his new Commandments, Patience in suffering for his Name, Delight in waiting upon God, meditating his Word ; &c. are Means appointed by the Lord ; not so properly, of establishing us in Hope and Confidence ; as of enlarging us in Knowledge, Joy, and Delight in the Lord ; enjoying Communion with the Father and the Son, and having the Glories of the Kingdom opened to us ; that our intellectual Powers may have Entrance into the Myseries of the Gospel. *2 Pet.*

i. 11.—The more diligent and circumspect a Believer is, in walking with God, the more enriched with heavenly Blessings he is certain to be. *IJa.* xl. 31. But we ought to distinguish, according to the Word of Truth, between Formation and Growth : or wherein the Growth of a Christian truly consists.

Where Christ is truly formed in the Soul, so as it is grounded and stablished in the Truth, as it is in Jesus ; that Soul is so firmly built upon the Rock, that he cannot grow any higher, in regard to the Firmness and Stability of his Hope, and Confidence in God. *Psal.* xxiii. 4. xlv. 2. *IJa.* xxvi. 3, 4. xxviii. 16. Yet, as he grows in Knowledge, and arrives to more perfect Views of the Glories of the Kingdom ; his Hope will be more extensive, and his Expectations more enlarged. Paul's Confidence in his God, was as firm as it was possible to be ; *Phil.* i. 21. *2 Tim.* i. 12. iv. 8. Yet he did not esteem himself to be arrived at his full Stature. *Phil.* iii. 12, 13, 14.—Confidence and Hope in the divine Grace, is the Source from whence all Love and Obedience spring. *2 Cor.* v. 14, 15. *1 Job.* iv. 9, 10, 11. Love and Obedience is the Way for us to walk in, in order to enjoy Communion with God, and grow up into the Fulness of Christ. *Jer.* xxix. 13. *1 Job.* iii. 24. *Jude* 20, 21. Thus, in all spiritual Enjoyments, holy Dispositions, and holy Conversation, Christ is all in all : *Alpha and Omega.* *Deut.* xxx. 6. *Jer.* xxxii. 40. *Rev.* xxi. 6, 7.

On the tenth Proposition.

This contains the very Language of the popular Preachers, and formal Professors. Laying down a negative.

gative Mark, to prove the Truth of a Man's Faith, or the Ground of his Confidence: and to preponderate against other discouraging Symptoms, which might tend to raise Doubts and Fears in the Mind.—But the Scripture quoted, does not prove the Thing asserted. For it is not, *Our not being disaffected*; but, Knowing ourselves to be of the Truth; that gives Assurance before God.—Nor is Confidence afforded from the Heart: but to the Heart: from God, who is greater than the Heart: by the Indwelling of his Spirit. 1 *Joh.* iii. 24. iv. 13.—The Love of God in Christ Jesus, is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost. *Rom.* v. 5. This, and this alone, is the undeniable Testimony of our Union with Christ: even the Witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son; by his Spirit, according to his Word, in our Hearts. 1 *Joh.* v. 9. And whosoever is manifestly blessed with the Love of God, the undeniable Effect is, That he loveth God. 1 *Joh.* iv. 19. He that loves God, loves the Children of God. 1 *Joh.* v. 1. And he that loves the Children of God, will, to his Power, be ready to serve them. *Gal.* v. 13. And if this Chain of Causes, and Effects, do genuinely follow one another; so that the Heart finds no Ground of Condemnation; *Hereby we know that we are of the Truth*: Not only radically, but practically walking therein.

The plain Design of the Text is, an Admonition, to a diligent walking in the Commandments of God; 1 *Joh.* v. 3. that our Hearts may be assured (or made bold) in Confidence towards God (or composed, without blushing in his Presence) that with chearful Countenance, we may come to the Throne of Grace, to ask,
in

in hopes to receive whatsoever we want : Forasmuch as we can then appeal to God, That the Grace he had bestowed on us, was not in vain : but has been improved to the true End. 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. See *Psal.* cxix. 6. 1 *Job.* iii. 22.—A pure Conscience, and holy Conversation, are Evidences to the Believer, that the Grace of God hath it's proper Influence in his Heart ; or that he practically stands in the Truth of God's Counsel. *Jer.* xxiii. 18, 22. 1 *Job.* ii. 6. But it is not possible they should be Evidences of his standing in vital Union with Christ : because no Man can know that his Conscience is pure, or his Conversation holy (whatever Appearance it makes) unless he is first certain, That the Love of God, in his Soul, is the vital Spring thereof. *Mat.* vii. 18.—A Child of Light knows his Relation to Christ, by the Truth dwelling in him. *Job.* xiv. 20. But to one another, they can only be known by the Fruits that appear. *Mat.* vii. 20.

On the eleventh Proposition.

If Conscience is not an infallible Witness, and that there may be Reason to suspect it of Partiality ; How weak and vain a Thing must it be, to admit such an Evidence, in Matters of a divine and eternal Nature ; where nothing but absolute Infallibility hath any Place ? And what an Insult must it be upon the Spirit of Truth, to join such a Witness as a Colleague with him, in the infallible Testimony of God ? And what Sense can be made of this Proposition ; when it is first said, " The Assurance of Hope is compleated only by the Testimony of the Spirit ; or it is hereby only, that Christians are crowned with such an Enjoyment : " Yet immediately subjoined,

subjoined, "Christians enjoying the Assurance of Hope, have two Witnesses, Conscience and the Holy Spirit"? —It is true, Conscience bears Witness to the Integrity of a Man's Heart, in his Words and Actions. *Rom. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 12.* But what kind of Witness, any one that knows the Gospel of Christ, should imagine Conscience to bear; in Things peculiar to the Father's own Will; I can form no Conception. The Scripture no where informs us, of Conscience bearing Witness to any such Things.

That Scripture (*Rom. viii. 16.*) brought to prove, That the Spirit does not bear Witness, but in conjunction with the Conscience; contains no such Doctrine. The Words are, *The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit.* No mention is made, of our Spirit (or Conscience) bearing Witness: but the Spirit itself. And he bears Witness *with*, to, or in our Spirit. For to say, The Spirit of Christ, and our Spirit, are joint Witnesses; would not prove common Sense. For if so, To whom must they bear Witness? It is the Spirit, Conscience, or Mind of Man, to which the Evidence of Truth is given. *Act. xvi. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 2. Gal. iv. 6.* And not the Spirit of a Creature, bearing Witness to itself; concerning Things, of which it never had any Knowledge, but by the Holy Ghost. *1 Cor. xii. 3.*—And that other Scripture (*Job. xvi. 13, 14.*) where it is said, *He shall not speak of himself*; is so very plain, and intelligible; shewing, That what the Holy Ghost testifies to his People, relates wholly to the Father, and the Son; that it is undeniable, the Subject is of so high a Nature, that the Conscience of Man is utterly incap-

incapable of testifying any Thing concerning it: But it is spoken of the Spirit only. *He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

On the twelfth Proposition.

It ought to have been explained, what is meant by the Spirit bearing Witness to Works. In what Sense, or to whom, is he supposed to bear Witness? But in the foregoing Proposition, and in this, The Truth is inverted. The former ascribes the Evidence of divine Things to the Conscience; the latter ascribes the Evidence of Men's Works to the Spirit.—The Spirit of God, in the Word of the Gospel, bears Witness to the Conscience, of the great Grace of the Father and the Son. And hereby the Soul receives that vital Influence, by which the genuine Fruits of the Spirit, and Works of Love, are produced. And the Conscience bears Witness of those Works, *That they are wrought in God.* 2 Cor. i. 12. Heb. xiii. 21.

The Scriptures annexed to the Proposition, do not contain any Thing like a Gloss, in favour of what seems to be intended in the Words; or bear any Relation to it: except Heb. vi. 10, 11. 2 Pet. i. 5.—10. and those express no such Thing, as heavenly Blessings having any Dependence on Creature Performances: nor can they (consistent with other Scriptures) be construed in any other Light, than either as Means, whereby we become familiarized with heavenly Things, or as making full Proof of the Faith and Hope that is in us. Heb. v. 11—14. Gal. vi. 16.

The Assertions are equivocal. For they naturally convey an Idea (yet do not affirm) That Assurance of
Hope

Hope is produced by Obedience, Self-denial, &c.—Again, Words joined in Connexion, in the same Sentence, which may be different in Fact, so as one to be true, and the other false. As, “Is not attained to, neither has an abiding—without, &c.” Now it is certain, that Assurance of Hope, and these Works of Obedience, proceed from one and the same Spirit. Therefore the Former cannot possibly have an Abiding in the Soul, without producing the Latter. But it does not therefore follow, that Assurance of Hope cannot exist, or be attained to, the first in Order. If the Words of Jesus took full Place in the Thief, *Luk. xxiii. 43.* he undeniably enjoyed full Assurance of Hope: tho’ little Obedience had appeared.—Further, it is suggested, as if Assurance of Hope had it’s Dependence on the Christian’s Works. Yet no Attempt to shew wherein it consists, or what Relation they bear one to another.—Are Works the Root on which it grows? Does the Soul conclude upon the Certainty of eternal Happiness, from the Works he has performed; proving his Title by that Test? Or is it bestowed as a Gratuity, for those Works? Or are they only as Means; so as in the Course of his diligent waiting upon God, and humble walking with God, he comes to more Light and Knowledge in divine Truth; and thereby the Soul becomes established in Hope? as *Heb. v. 14.* Or are the Works only as Evidences of the Truth of the Hope? as *Jam. ii. 18.*

The Hope of a Christian is nothing more, or less, than God Himself, in the Stability of his Promise, dwelling in the Heart. *Jer. xiv. 8. xvii. 7, 13. Joel. iii. 16. Col. i. 27. 1 Tim. i. 1.* Therefore it is impos-

sible for any Believer, who knows what Hope is, to be persuaded that it can have any Dependence on his Works of Obedience. It depends alone on the Spirit of Adoption; *Gal. v. 5.* whereby the Soul is established in the Faithfulness of God. *Psa. xlviii. 14. Heb. x. 23. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.*—Hope in the Heart, is a certain Degree, or Measure of Faith. And this Measure, may not be attained with the first Commencement of Faith; but by Degrees, as the Mind comes to be established in the Knowledge of the Son of God: To which, a diligent Attention to the precious Truth of the Gospel, and an humble waiting upon God, under the vital breathing of the Holy Ghost, must be very conducive. *Prov. ii. 1—5.* But, be it noted, these are not properly stiled *Works*.—Yet again, Those Things that are truly called Works, *Labours of Love*, performed in the Spirit of Christ, may, in a remote Sense, be conducive to the same End. For, the more clear the Conscience is kept from Guilt, either of Commission, or Omission; the more the Mind is disentangled from the World, fleshly Lusts, or spiritual Wickedness; the more Delight a Person takes in the Will of his heavenly Father; and the more free, composed, and serene, will the Soul be, in searching the Scriptures, meditating the Truth of God, and waiting on his heavenly Father, for spiritual Enlargements.—Diligence in Works of Self-denial, Labours of Love, keeping the Commandments of Christ, Crucifixion to the World, &c. are Fruits of Faith, Hope, and Love; and Witnesses, whereby the Truth thereof is manifested to others. *Joh. xiii. 35. Col. i. 5, 6. 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. xi. 4, 8, 13, 27.*

On the thirteenth Proposition.

This Proposition is conceived in Terms so doubtful, indeterminate, and contradictory ; that it is very difficult to ascertain, what is the real Design. Only there is one Point which must be attended to ; in which the Whole may be supposed to center, and terminate. That is, “ The painful Fear of coming short—of—Rest and Glory with Jesus at his Coming.” Yet here I might suspect an Evasion ; because it is not expressed, His second, or personal Coming. But inasmuch as it naturally conveys that Idea ; there I will take it.

The Scriptures quoted in Proof of the Hope, do prove it to be of such a Nature, as is absolutely incompatible with such a Fear as is described.—*A Hope that maketh not ashamed. The Confidence, and the Rejoicing of the Hope. No Fear in Love ; but perfect Love casteth out Fear.*—Therefore, it is impossible, That painful Fear, or Fear which hath Torment, should cohabit with the true Christian's Hope. In what Soul soever the one dwells, the other has no Residence. The naming of these two Opposites together, forms an Image perfectly absurd.

It is suggested as tho', in Time, this Fear would give Place to an abundant Sense of divine Love ; and then, that Love, by the Holy Ghost, should perform the same Office, which the Fear now does : and even this, makes a Figure most monstrous. But afterwards it is asserted, “ That this Fear is a Motive to the Christian's Warfare, till he finishes his Course.” So then, divine Love never reigns, till this Life is ended. And according to this,

The War must be over, before the real Conqueror ever takes the Field.

It is said, "The greatest Assurance of Hope does not set any Christian above the Fear of Disobedience, and of it's Consequences." This is true, for the stronger the Hope, more is the Aversion to Sin, and to it's Consequences. But it is added, "From the divine Justice." What is here intended, we are left to guess: but I suppose the Meaning to be, *Eternal Wrath*. If this be the Meaning, it is false. A Child of Light is delivered from the Wrath to come; and has no such Fear. Nor do any of the Scriptures quoted in Proof of this Fear, express any such Thing. And were the Lambs of Christ left in such Suspense all their Days, it would cast the greatest Contempt upon the faithful Witness. *Rev. iii. 14*. But they know their Dwelling to be in him. *Joh. xiv. 20*. And they believe his Word, infallible; That they shall not come into Condemnation. That none is able to pluck them out of his Father's Hand. *Joh. v. 24. x. 28, 29*.

This Fear is joined together with Hope (tho' Fire and Water, Life and Death, cannot be more opposite) as, "Two peculiar Springs, or Motives in the Believer's Heart." But what are they Springs of? Should I suppose them Springs of, or Motives to Obedience, Self-denial, crucifying the Flesh, &c. This would be a Contradiction to the preceeding Proposition; which suggests those Things to be the Springs of Hope.—Yea, to this Conjunction of Hope and Fear, is ascribed, Preservation from [drawing back to Perdition. A direct Contradiction to the Word of Truth. *Phil. i. 6. 2 Tim.*

i. 12. 1 *Pet.* i. 5. And a direct Contradiction to the very Nature of the Thing: for that painful Fear contains in it the Nature of Perdition. As it is acknowledged in the eight Proposition; "Faith produces Joy wherever it is. Faith and Joy are inseparable." Therefore, painful Fear, is the Opposite to Faith: and proceeds only from a carnal Principle. Not from the Spirit of Christ. *Rom.* viii. 15. 2 *Tim.* i. 7. Consequently, it is impossible it should be the Spring of spiritual Principles, or holy Actions. And until this kind of Fear is expelled by Love, it will be impossible for the genuine Hope to exist. *Rev.* xxi. 8.—And for that (falsely called) Hope, which is mixed with Diffidence, or Fear of falling short; It is only a carnal Supposition, a vague Expectation, or uncertain Wish; without any Foundation: and can only inspire the Heart with carnal, and selfish Principles: for it can produce nothing but Death. *Rom.* viii. 5—8.

The Truth is this, Rest at Christ's Coming, centers alone in the sovereign Pleasure of God. *Mat.* xx. 23. *Luk.* xii. 32. Neither the Hope nor Fear, Virtue or Performance, of any Creature, has any Influence thereinto; either to obtain, or fall short: as every Believer upon Earth knows. *Rom.* ix. 16. *Gal.* iii. 18.—Yet there is a spiritual Rest in Christ (not at his second Coming, but) by Faith, under the Blessing of the Gospel: To the Enjoyment whereof, diligent Attention to the Scriptures, serious Méditation, patient waiting upon God, humble walking in his Commandments, &c. may be conducive. *Eph.* iv. 15.—And in this Case, Hope of attaining, attended with a filial, reverential, cautious Fear, of falling Short (not a painful Fear)

does truly animate the Christian to press forward. *1 Cor.* ix. 24—27, *2 Cor.* vi. 11—18. *Phil.* iii. 10—15. *Col.* ii. 6, 7. *Heb.* ii. 1. iv. 1, 11. *1 Pet.* i. 17. *2 Pet.* i. 11.—And it is no other, but either a due Reverence of God, or this prudential Fear; that is pointed to, in all the Scriptures annexed to the Proposition: in favour of this painful Fear. The Lord, *Luk.* xii. 5. does not forewarn his Disciples to fear being cast into Hell; but to stand in Awe of Him who possesses all Power. Paul, *1 Cor.* ix. 27. does not suggest a Fear of eternal Perdition; which (according to the strong Confidence he frequently expresses) was impossible for him to apprehend: But his Concern was for the Success of the Gospel; lest it's Progress should be hindered: and the Virtue of his Ministry lost. See Ver. 12. The coming short, *Heb.* iv. 1. plainly appears by the Context, to have no Respect to eternal Glory, but to spiritual Consolation, in this present Life. See Ver. 3, 7, 10. The Salvation, *Phil.* ii. 12. has no Respect to obtaining eternal Life: but Salvation from disobedient Conduct, evil Conversation, and sinful Companions. See Ver. 15. *Act.* ii. 40.

As for the Slur, noted at the Bottom of the Proposition; it no way affects the Christian. But such as join a vague Hope with painful Fear, are truly pointed out. The Believer ventures nothing on the Score of *His Christianity*: he rests all upon his *Christ*. He rejoices in the Promise of Perseverance; knowing it has not the least Tendency to relax the Force of the divine Law. He knows no devotional Guesses, or Self-Confidence: but an immoveable Certainty, thro' Confidence
in

in the Lord. He has not learned that common canting Language, mentioned. His Language is, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.—I know whom I have believed.—We know that he abideth in us.—Being confident of this very Thing.* &c. And hence he is inspired with that strong Pronunciation; *Yea doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*—But they that have received the Spirit of painful Fear, have nothing to sustain them, but their own imaginary Christianity, devotional Guesses, and Self-Confidence. And when they find these Things fail, they retreat to that common Sort of Language. And often give it an Accent still more flat; even as low as this; viz. “I would humbly hope, I have some Reason to believe the Lord has begun a good Work in me, and would willingly trust he will carry it on.” This Language is the natural Production of the Spirit of painful Fear. That is, Bondage, and Alienation from God; in it's various Modes of Operation.

So far as I am able to judge of this Proposition; It is wholly formed upon a legal Plan, and intirely breathes the Spirit of Bondage: The Author appears to be a perfect Stranger to the Power of the Gospel, and a perfect Blunderer in the Theory.

On the fourteenth Proposition.

This Proposition is indeterminate. The Words, *Pastors or Elders*, leave us at Uncertainty, what is fully intended. For a Pastor is a Feeder, and the Name cannot justly be applied to any in the Church, but a Minister, or Preacher of the Word: *Joh. xxi. 15, 16, 17.* But an Elder is a general Term, for any kind of Officer

Officer, intrusted with Oversight, or Government; in State, Country, City, or in the Church of God. *Act. vi. 3. 1 Cor. xii. 28.* And they that labour in the Word, are distinguished from the other. *1 Tim. v. 17.*

It is to be observed, That Jesus appointed only one Order; whom he named Apostles. *Luk. vi. 13.* (as for the other seventy, *Luk. x. 1—20.* we hear no more of them, as presiding in the Church, in any Office; only their present Message :) And all faithful Ministers of Christ, are properly the Successors of the Apostles, in all Things that remain necessary in the Church, to the End of the World : (if they were not, there would be a Defect :) In publishing the Gospel, feeding the Flock, administering Ordinances, and ruling in the House of God. But in those Things which were peculiar to those individual Persons, and were in them compleated, and therefore are no longer necessary; in these, they left no Successors. viz. Being Eye Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection. *Act. i. 21. 22. 1 Cor. ix. 1. Gal. i. 12.* Being infallibly inspired to testify what they received of the Lord. *Job. xiv. 26. 1 Cor. xi. 23. xv. 3. 2 Pet. i. 16.* And invested with Authority to command, and appoint Laws in the Church. *Act. xv. 28. xvi. 4. 2 Thes. iii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 2.*

The Apostles did, for some Time perform every Part of the ministerial Office, in the Church at Jerusalem: *Act. iv. 35, 37.* which is a full Demonstration, that no other Order of Ministers, or Elders, is essentially necessary. And it were to be wished, that no other Order might be found necessary in the Churches of Christ: which, if Necessity did not require, then, to have

have them would be superfluous. It was thro' the Defect which was in the Church, that a second Order became occasionally necessary. *Act. vi. 1—4.* We find no distinct Account of any other Officers, or Elders, in the Church, beside these two, *Bishops and Deacons*. The one, primary Ministers, and Overseers of the Church; the other, occasional Assistants to those Ministers, in such Cases as should be found needful. And these Deacons might be blessed with Gifts differing; and likewise there might be different Occasions; so as some of them might be more particularly appointed to, or employed in Government, keeping Peace and Order; and others in disposing the temporal Concerns of the Church: which are only different Branches of the same Office. *1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.* As for the different Names or Titles given to the Ministers of the Gospel, as, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher, &c. tho' they may express different Branches of the Work, or different Gifts; they do not signify different Offices, or so many Orders of Ministers.

Now, be it observed, When the Lord and his Disciples first sat down together as a Church, to eat the Lord's Supper; there was only one acting Elder among them: for the Apostles had not entered upon the Execution of their Office. And when the Lord gave Authority to the Twelve, he spake to Peter in the singular Number. *Mat. xvi. 19.* Tho' it is not to be supposed, nor is it ever found, that Peter took this Authority peculiar to himself, but in common with all the rest; but hence it appears, that the full Power was given to each Individual. And the faithful Ministers of Christ,

to

to the End of the World, must needs retain full Power, to put in Execution, those Rules which the Apostles left upon Record: or otherwise, the Promise of Christ would fail, of being with his Church alway. And since he has not limited any Number; either the full Power is committed to every one, or it will be a Dispute, Whether it rests in less than twelve? But Paul takes the Authority as invested in the Singular Number. *1 Cor. vii. 10. 1 Tim. iv. 11*—Where there is a Number of Believers, united in the Spirit, and a duly qualified Minister among them; there are all the Essentials of a Church of Christ.

The Question is not, Whether there was a Plurality in many Places? or, whether it be not desirable, where the Lord is pleased to multiply spiritual Gifts? or, whether, in the general (especially whensoever Churches become numerous) there is not a Necessity for more than One?—But the Question is (since no positive Direction is given, by Christ or his Apostles, in this Case) By what Authority does any one deny the Existence of a true Church of Christ, without such a certain Number?

As to what is asserted, Thus much is true; They are not such Churches as the Apostles settled, who do not exert the Capacity which God has given them, to have all Things done in due Order. And consequently, when God has blessed with proper Gifts, and Circumstances require; that do not appoint proper Persons to overlook, and take Care, that Things be attended to according to the Pattern. Neither can they be such Churches, where Persons cannot be found sufficient to
execute

execute such Offices, as Necessity may call for. But the Number is not fixed; any otherwise than as the Number of Disciples, and Circumstances of the Church make necessary.—As to the Ordination of Elders in every Church, and City; *Act. xiv. 23, Tit. i. 5.* Nothing can be gathered from these Phrases, whereby it can be determined, whether there were more than one, in one Place: there are mentioned a Plurality of Churches, and Cities, as well as Elders. Beside, they are called Churches, before such Ordination.—As to the Word, *Angel*, I dare boldly say, I can sit as loose from all human Traditions, as he that composed the Proposition; whosoever he be: and yet, I do not perceive a Plurality intended in that Word, in the Epistles to the Churches in Asia. For the Name is singular in every Epistle: and they are represented as the same precise Number as the Churches. *Rev. i. 20.* I know, there was at Ephesus, other Elders beside the one called the *Angel*. Nor do I pretend to say, there was, or was not, the same in all those Churches. But the Holy Ghost appears to point out one Individual, by that Name. And the Pronoun Plural, *Rev. ii. 24.* does not contradict it: for tho' the Epistles were directed to Individuals, they were written to the Churches. *Rev. i. 11.*—There probably might be those in Thyatira, who had testified against those evil Doers: tho' (like Eli) they had not put in Execution the Laws of God, against them: as also, some who had been silent; yet had not come into their Secret. And these might be distinguished by *You*, and *The rest*. Doubtless the Distinction was understood, by them to whom it was immediately directed.

rected. But we ought not to force a Meaning, which the Holy Ghost hath not expressed.

On the fifteenth Proposition.

Christ did give Direction to his Apostles, about binding and loosing in his Churches. But in *Mat. xviii.* he does not give any Direction, for Two or Three to preside as a Presbytery. But (in case of Need) to take one or two as Witnesses: without mentioning whether they be in the Capacity of Elders, or not: only Believers. See *Ver. 1—6.*

As to the Letter, written upon *Mat. xviii. 18, 19.* It is there said, "This Church on Earth was to have *two or three gathered together*, presiding therein, without which Presbytery we cannot know from the Scripture that they have such Power." But if a Church of Christ, walking in the Spirit, do attend to the Rules which Christ has given; We do know from the Scripture, that they have such Power; tho' they be not subjected to such a Presbyterian Hierarchy, as Men have invented, but Christ never appointed. It is further said, "Such a Church as this was at Corinth." It is certain, there was a Church at Corinth, which was invested with this Power. But that there was such a Presbytery presiding over them, is a human Fiction. Paul admonishes the Church at Corinth, to exert the Power given them of God; but he does not direct his Speech to two or three Presidents: but to the whole Body: allowing all the Members to be Judges. *1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 13. vi. 2—5.* The Distinction about, "Two or three to appear as Witnesses;" and, "Two or three to preside in the Judgment;" is an Addition to the Words of Christ.

The

The Lord says nothing about two or three presiding in the Judgment. But where private Admonition does not prevail, the whole Church is made the decisive Judge. —As to the Puff, and Flourish, about, “The Gloss which *Mat. xviii. 20.* generally receives;” I think it not worth a Reply. I despise all unscriptural Raptures, of what Kind soever, as much as he that wrote the Letter. Let him keep his invented Fictions to himself; And then, the Words of Christ, in the pure Light, as he gave them, do sufficiently explain themselves, without any human Gloss.

On the sixteenth Proposition.

We do not find in any of the Apostles Writings, that the Lord's Supper was eaten, without a Number of Disciples to partake, and a Person duly qualified to administer it. *Act. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 23.* But whether there ought to be more than one, their Writings say nothing about it. And where the Scripture is silent, every one that receives the Kingdom of God as a little Child, will be silent too. Only this we know—In the first Administration of that Ordinance, there was no such Presbytery, or Plurality of Elders presiding. *Luk. xxii. 19, 20.*

On the seventeenth Proposition.

Concerning the Frequency, or stated Times for eating the Lord's Supper; We may find enough said about it, in old Traditions: which tell us (among other vague Stuff) That some ancient Churches practised it every Day in the Week. But in the Oracles of God, we have no Account how oft the Apostles practised it. The Lord fixed no precise Times; but left it to Discretion: *As oft as ye drink it.* We know the Teaching and

Preaching of the Doctrine of Christ was a perpetual Work. *Act. v. 42.* But this Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, *1 Cor. x. 16.* can only be directed, as Churches shall judge to be most for their Edification.—And as to the Hour; wheresoever we have any particular Account of it, it appears to be in the Evening. (To talk of Supper-Time, is ridiculous: because that is arbitrary.) But it was not late in the Evening, when our Lord eat it with his Disciples. As appears very plain, from those Things which passed afterwards, before his going out: as related, *Luk. xxii. 24—38.* And in the Evangelist John, five Chapters are filled with the Account of that Evening's Conversation. *Joh. xiii. 2. xviii. 1.* Beside, it was along with, or immediately after, the eating of the Passover. And this was an invariable Rule with the Jews, That every Feast, or Sacrifice, to be performed on any particular Day; must be so early as to be finished before the Sun was down: otherwise (as their Day began at Even, *Lev. xxiii. 32.*) another Day would have commenced.

On the eighteenth Proposition.

The Example of Jesus, in washing his Disciples Feet, does not at all appear to be intended as an Institution for the performing of that particular Act, any more than any other Acts of Love, Condescension, Hospitality, and Kindness one to another; as Necessity should require. It was done only as an Instance of his Love, Humility, and Readiness to serve them. *Mar. x. 45.* And to recommend to them the same Disposition, one towards another. *Gal. v. 13.*—And forasmuch as in those Climates, and in the manner Men frequently
were

were shod ; it became a necessary, and almost constant Practice ; and to do it one for another, was an Act of special Hospitality ; and manifested great Love, and Humility ; it being esteemed one of the meanest Offices that could be performed. *1 Sam. xxv. 41.* Therefore, the Lord of Glory pitched upon this particular Piece of Self-Abasement, to strike the Hearts of his Disciples with a Sense of his Officiousness to them, and their Duty one to another. And this Example remains as a Pattern for our Imitation, to the End of the World. Nor do I make any Doubt, that wheresoever the Disciples of Christ are to be found, those Works of Piety hereby recommended to them, will be found also. And even the very Act itself, if Necessity require it. But to do it when it would be useless, there being no Occasion, would only be Superstition.—For the Lord did not enjoin it by express Command ; as he did those Ordinances which pertain to the Worship of His House : and relate only to heavenly Things. He only recommends it, and reasons upon it, as other Labours of Love, or Service done to one another. *Mat. xx. 26, 27.* Which are only required, when they are wanted. *Mat. xxv. 35, 39.* Nor do we find any Account of the Apostles practising any such Thing, in the Church.—As to what is mentioned of the Widow ; it can have no Relation to a public Ordinance, in the House of God : from the Administration whereof, Women are prohibited. It is only supposed to be done among other Works of Hospitality, in her own House.

On the nineteenth Proposition.

The Kiss of Charity, I find mentioned in Scripture,

only once : but an holy Kifs, is often recommended. Whereby true Love, Union, and Fellowship in the Spirit, appears to be intended : as the Words immediately preceding, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 11, 12. do fully import. And this ought to be manifested, by all the proper Tokens of christian Sincerity, and brotherly Affection.— But to confine it to a carnal kissing of the Mouth, is utterly too low for a spiritual Fraternity : and pours great Contempt upon the Holy Ghost, that he should give so many Directions about a Thing so trifling. It is only a figurative Term ; and does not intend a carnal, but a spiritual Kifs. And so, Kings and Judges kifs the Son ; who never saw him in the Flesh. *Psal.* ii. 10, 11, 12.—Judas kissing the Lord, does not shew it to have been practised by Christ and his Disciples : it only shews that it was a Practice known, and sometimes used, in those Days, as well as in these.

On the twentieth Proposition.

When any Person, of his own free Will, is disposed to make a Feast ; the Lord has given Direction, how to conduct it. *Luk.* xiv. 12, 13, 14. But no Feast is commanded, only the Lord's Supper. All other Feasts were, and still are, merely voluntary.—It is not doubted, That Christians in the Apostles Days, and in all Ages, have so much Love to one another, as that they frequently eat together, with Gladness : but that they stately feasted together, is more than can be proved. For tho' the Histories of ancient Superstitions, abound with a confused Noise about this Usage, and the Irregularities it occasioned ; the Scripture is not so explicit, as to inform us, how it was in the Apostles Days.—

What

What is mentioned, *Act. ii. 46.* proves no more than this, That in their going and returning, preaching, worshipping, or assembling, to whatever House they came, among the Brethren, they were made welcome : being freely entertained, and chearfully partook, without Ceremony.—As to what is mentioned, *1 Cor. xi. 21.* in what Way that Disorder had prevailed, is not clearly expressed ; but it was something very unbecoming : therefore not a Precedent to us. And those Hints, *2 Pet. ii. 13. Jude. 12.* do not discover whether those Feasts were stated or occasional : Neither do they cast any favourable Countenance towards them. So then, to pretend to follow them in this, is only to follow an *Ignis Fatuus* ; by a voluntary Humility, and Will-Worship.

On the twenty-first Proposition.

The Scriptures annexed to this Proposition, do clearly prove, That to be a Christian, and to be taken up with the Love of the World, are Things utterly incompatible. They whose Hearts are set upon earthly Things, cannot be set upon heavenly Things ; and consequently, they cannot be Worshippers of the true God. *1 John ii. 15, 16.* Neither have those any Right to call themselves Christians, who can trample on any of Christ's Commandments. *Luk. vi. 46.* And this must needs be the Case, when Persons gather earthly Treasure with Greediness, lay it up with Anxiety, withhold it with Penury ; and cannot trust to the Almighty's Care, so as chearfully to dispense with what He has put in their Hands, when the Cause of Christ calls for it. It is certain, they do not know Him as a Father : nor can, in Truth,

call Him their God. He that hath not his Affections loosed from the World, is not a Disciple of Jesus. *Mat. x. 37. Gal. vi. 14.*

But the Proposition ought to have been more explicit; Whether the Design be true Christian Liberty; To enjoy and improve what God has given us, with Thankfulness; and so to possess, as if we possessed not; giving Alms of such Things as we have; willing to communicate, according to our Ability; distributing cheerfully, to the Necessity of the Saints; and without distrust, or grudging, ready to dispose of all we have, for the Glory of the Giver; so far as our Understanding directs.—Or, whether the Design leads to a Spirit of Bondage; to make Hospitality a Task; for a Man to bind himself to give, to such a Measure; or that his Conscience should torment him, in Case he finds any Increase of Substance, which he does not immediately give away; or apprehend Guilt, so long as he keeps any Thing in his Hand, without giving away the last Mite, &c. There may be Cases, in which a Christian may find it his Duty, to reserve in his Hand, of the Substance which God has given him. *2 Cor. xii. 14. 1 Tim. v. 8.*

On the Appendix.

All the spiritual Wisdom that ever shined forth from God, shines in the Scriptures; and all the Blessings of Grace that ever God revealed, are revealed in the Scriptures; and all the Comfort and Hope that any Saint enjoys, while upon Earth, he enjoys thro' the Knowledge of God, as he is declared in the Scriptures. Therefore the Reading of the Scriptures, is a Matter of
the

the utmost Consequence, to every Child of God. And the ultimate Concern of every faithful Minister of Christ, throughout his whole Work, is, To open, to communicate, and to impress the Truth of the Scriptures, upon them that hear him. And all his preaching is alone to that Intent : therefore he cannot neglect Reading.—Only the Ministers of Christ do not hold themselves obliged, to comply with human Prescriptions, to reduce their Reading to a certain Form : but to be at Liberty, to read so much, and in such Order, as to them may appear most conducive to the appointed, and desired End.
Let all Things be done to edifying.





Mr. JOHNSON'S
COMMENT,
Considered.

THE commentator is thus liberal and circumstantial in his commendation of *Palæmon*: “I also found
“ *Palæmon* strongly asserting divers truths, which are
“ essential to the life of the christian character.—As,
“ the scripture testimony, being the alone directory ;
“ excluding all human tradition whatsoever.—The im-
“ mutable perfection of God ; without any deviation,
“ or declension, in any part of his character, his coun-
“ sel, words, or works.—The invariableness of the di-
“ vine law ; and the impossibility of the least mitiga-
“ tion.—That Christ is all in all ; admits no competitor,
“ but excludes all human excellency.—And, that the
“ Spirit of truth, speaks only in the sacred oracles, in
“ opposition to every enthusiastical spirit.—He seems
“ to be well grounded in that which he calls his lead-
“ ing principle, and to defend it well.—His talent
“ is conspicuous, for carrying away the rubbish ; ga-
“ thering out the weeds ; and burying the dead men’s
“ bones of tradition : Or at least, for setting up signs to
“ discover them. *Ezek.* xxxix. 14, 15.—I was glad
“ to find *Palæmon* advance in such an heroic manner ;
“ to

“ to form an attack in front, upon the confederate armies of this enormous devourer ; this monstrous idol, tradition.”

I have no intention to contend about the justness of these representations ; tho' there appears not much propriety in making Palæmon an enterprising hero, combating armies, and at the very same time making their graves *.

But why, thought I, might we not have been favoured with as distinct a view of Palæmon's blemishes as his beauties when his character was in hand ? Our commentator is scarcely to be excused in putting us off with a general reference to Jehu's idolatry in order to illustrate the disadvantageous part of Palæmon's character ; tho' he might well have been excused the labor of praising him, had he only been circumstantial in pointing out his defects, or, if he chooses, his wickedness and idolatry. Had all those encomiums on Palæmon been spared, not one of his friends, or his enemies, had reaped gain or loss, in any shape, by the omission : But if he be such a person as is some way suggested, the commentator had been intitled to our thanks “ for laying open, in a just manner,” every circumstance of his iniquity.

* If the commentator make *tradition* the mystery of the army of Gog, and Palæmon a burier of bones *after* the battle which gives the finishing stroke to Gog and his army ; must we not take him to be jesting with his deity where he implores success to attend every one who shall *yet* be raised up to jeopard his life in the high places of the field ?

We

We see it observed, that the *mystery of iniquity* is certain to prevail and reign in the world, “until the Lord shall consume it, with the spirit of his mouth;” and destroy it with the brightness of his coming.” And we must take this to be hinting, that (1) the consumption has not yet taken place, and (2) that the *consumption* and *destruction* import the same thing, or, however, take place at the same time: whereas it is plain, from the apostle’s manner of speaking, *2 Thes. ii. 7, 8.* that the *consumption*, by the *spirit* of the Lord’s mouth, preceds the *destruction*, by the *brightness of his coming*. The Revelation mystically describes the consumption, Chap. xvi. 1—16. and the destruction ver. 17.—21. The *mystery of iniquity* here, stands opposed to the *mystery of Godliness*, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* in which chapter Paul gives the character of bishops and deacons, all the officers who were to continue in the churches after revelation should be compleated: and we find this in the bishop’s character; *not a novice*: for which *this* reason is given, *lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*

Paul, in speaking of *the man of sin* as the *mystery of iniquity*, leads us to consider him as prefigured in the accounts we have of *pride* and *idolatry* in the Old Testament: and it would seem, from *Rev. xvii. 5.* that our eyes should, in particular, be on what is said of that idolatrous city, Babylon, whose prince aimed to be as the Most High; even as Jerusalem, the city of the great king, had a *mystery* in it respecting godliness.

The scriptures will bear us out in maintaining, that
the

the warning which Paul gave of the life and operation of the mystery of iniquity respected the pride of christian rulers, seeking who should be greatest in the same brotherhood ; which, in time, produced a single bishop raised above the presbyters in every Church* ; and at last an *universal bishop*.

If we follow our commentator, we must not admit the thought, that the consumption determined to come on *that wicked* one, mentioned by Paul, has yet taken place ; but if we compare the description of the *consumption* of antichrist †, with his *rise* § and *reign* ‡ ; and these with the events in the antichristian kingdom, we may perhaps see that the determined consumption has been on that kingdom this long while ; and that it is now fast consuming and full of darkness. Yea, and who ever are true enemies to this monstrous kingdom, may rejoice in the prospect which the scriptures afford of the approaching *destruction* by the *brightness* of Christ's second coming.

Tho' the commentator's harangue on tradition seems to suggest, that he has been more engaged in rumaging his fancy than tracing the scriptures on that subject ; yet I am far from denying the singular advantages which have flowed from tradition to the kingdom of the wicked one, as it stands opposed to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

* When the epistles were written, which go under the name of Ignatius, the *bishop* stood distinct from the *presbyters*, and above them.

† *Rev.* xvi. 1—16. § *Chap.* viii. 7—11. ‡ *Chap.* xiii.
And

And after all these *swelling words* about tradition, there appears nothing in the comment whereby the author's freedom from its slavery, or his courage to take the scripture as its own interpreter, can be fairly concluded.

The commentator does not seem altogether satisfied with the subjects of the propositions. He cannot find any of them relating to his "DEEP foundation," which he calls the "infinite fulness of Christ—The inexhaustible streams of the eternal fountain, &c." He finds, "even those articles which relate to spiritual blessings, seemingly, all superficial."

The articles referred to, do indeed relate to the effects produced by the Gospel, in the minds and conversation of those who believe it. And it is possible for us to talk in a high strain about the grace of the Gospel, and yet bewray our ignorance of it, by speaking of its productions in the heart and life. The fundamental articles of the christian faith may be proposed, and gain a verbal assent, or the confession of the mouth; when at the same time their true influence will be denied, or sufficient demonstration afforded that they are not believed in the heart.

The author of the propositions had his jealousy strengthened, that ignorance of the person and work of the Son of God prevailed in the greater number of those connected with him in the profession of christianity where he resides, by frequent hints in their conversation on the influence of the saving truth: hints which imported their foundation of hope and comfort was
some-

something *beside* the *bare report* of the Gospel: And he ought not to be backward in acknowledging he has but too much reason to say, that even himself has been instrumental in hardening them against conviction from the scriptures; and establishing them in that corrupt notion of the Gospel, in which they were first settled. He has, however since taken the measures, both in public and private discourse, that, at the time, appeared to him most eligible to know their view of the divine grace. Upon his jealousy still growing he proposed the articles, intimating his design of separating from any who disagreed with him, upon the subjects of them. And, what ever imprudences may be imputable to him in the course of his behaviour, thro' want of boldness, or otherwise, in avowing his sentiments, during the time of the difference, previous to the separation, he has no reason to mourn for the difference and its consequence.

There don't seem to be any occasion for formally considering the commentator's *deep foundation*; since, as the author of the propositions apprehends, if he was simply to propose to his former associates what he takes for the leading doctrines of christianity, they would be assented to by them all.

Neither does it seem a matter of importance to inquire into the commentator's meaning, in describing how the articles are *superficial*. The description stands thus; "Not pointing to what Christ is, but to what
" the soul experiences of Christ, in himself: rather the
" manner of enjoyment, than the thing to be enjoyed.*"
Yet it may be observed, that the Gospel reports to us

G

what

62 Mr. Johnson's Comment considered.

what Christ is ; and there can be no true " manner of enjoyment " but by the belief of that report.

The commentator favours us with seven rules for our direction in reading the Scriptures. The first is, that we distinguish between standing laws in the church, and occasional directions : and he refers to the occasional directions, but leaves us to seek for his *standing laws* : and the occasional directions referred to, cannot very easily be mistaken for standing laws. The second is to distinguish between particular positive institutions, and general comprehensive directions : here again we have to seek for his notion of *positive institutions*. The third is between admonitions to things *practicable*, and things spoken in *irony* to adversaries : here we are referred to *Mat. xii. 38. Luk. xvi. 9.* but we had better take some pains in considering these texts, before we admit them to be ironical : and the latter is not spoken to adversaries. The text in Matthew detects an inconsistency in the way the Jews went about to oppose Jesus, and that in Luke shews his disciples how to use earthly riches. The fourth is between categorical and metaphorical expressions. The texts referred to here are *Mat. vii. 6. Luk. xii. 35.* but would any person in his wits take these scriptures *categorically* ? The fifth distinction, resembling the first, is between what the apostles ordained as standing rules, and what they ordered on circumstantial occasions. We ought here to have had an instance of *standing rules* : and I am not satisfied to have *1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, 3.* excluded from the number of the apostles standing rules. The sixth distinction, is between, things com-

commanded, and things practised of free choice : here too we want an instance of *commanded things* : and as to the voluntary things referred to, it may be questioned, if we shall not talk long about our *liberty* before we see the *occasion* to take *Act. ii. 45.* for a precedent ? The seventh rule, directs us to learn the end and use of every ordinance before we practise it, to avoid superstition in our practice. The disciples of Jesus Christ are to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever they see His apostles teaching them, *Mat. xxviii. 20.* If they do not they are disobedient : and tho' it is not easy to conceive how they should be ignorant of the ends and uses of the *institutions* of the Gospel, yet it is very easy to conceive how, in the practice of those institutions, they may come to have a more extensive knowledge of their ends and uses. The complexion of this rule reminds me of the first reasoning about the propriety of the divine command. *Gen. iii. 1.*

P R O P. I.

It seems, in this proposition, "The word revelation—is ambiguous :—" but this is not the only proposition in which words are ambiguous, unintelligible, or awkwardly expressed. The commentator frequently finds occasion to use the like complaint against the propositions : But the author of the propositions is not singular in this respect : The commentator's antagonists generally prove a kind of blundering, unintelligible, or equivocal writers. (Hard case indeed !) This may
appear.

appear from his almost constant way of complaining as referred to below *.

But if the term revelation is ambiguous "in this case," In what case shall we suppose it may be used with certainty? And what hindered him to follow those who take the word "simply and honestly, for the truth revealed?" Or why should the author of the propositions be careful about the order of his expressions, to escape the censure of *vain janglers*, and *sophistical amusers*, while he sees an inspired servant of Christ without carefulness in this matter? *Rev. i. 1.*

We cannot speak of the *letter* of the Gospel according to the scriptures, but as we speak of those things which but dimly represented it before they were unveiled by the apostles. So Jesus, John chap. vi. spake to the Jews about *eating his flesh and drinking his blood*; but signified to his disciples that those expressions had a meaning in them not understood.—*It is the spirit that quickneth, the FLESH profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you are SPIRIT, and are LIFE.* The gospel revelation, as we have it from the apostles, is the *spirit* and *truth* of the *letter*, which contained it before their ministry. So the apostles, speaking of their spiritual ability as ministers of the New Testament, distinguish themselves from the ministers of the letter. *2 Cor. iii. 6.* Paul makes *flesh* and *letter* terms of the same import; and

* See his treatise on *The faith of God's elect.* p. 36, 100, 101, 120, 123, 125, 128, 131. *Election of God undisguised.* p. 3, 13, 15, 23, 25. *Occasional review of Pretendary of Lichfield's sermon, &c.* p. 6, 23, 24, 25, 28, 40.

Prop. 2. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. 65

and so distinguishes between the fleshly, or literal, and spiritual circumcision. *Rom. ii. 27, 28, 29.* The same apostle furnishes us with this twofold view of the law, as it stood in the nation of Israel. *Rom. vii. 6, 14.* This was the law which said, *Thou shalt not covet.* ver. 7. The same thing might be observed of the righteousness of that law. The letter, then, has an equal relation to the law and to the Gospel, which were both fully revealed in the death of Jesus. *Rom. i. 17. 18.* This revelation, soon after, set aside the letter. *Rom. vi. 1—6. Heb. viii. 13.*

The way in which many incline to speak of the Gospel, as a dead letter, merits disdain from every hearty friend to revelation. And I cannot say it intimates the greatest respect for the Gospel, to insinuate that, where it comes, *in word only*, to such persons it is only as a dead letter; unless no more was intended thereby than that those who do not receive and obey it, *esteem* it only as a dead letter. Paul, *1 Thes. i. 5.* sets the Thessalonians in opposition to those whose faith is unfruitful, or is dead, being alone. But it comes not *as* a dead letter to any. It is everlasting life to those who believe it: and it demonstrates the eternal perdition of those who reject it: *He that believeth not, shall be damned.—He that rejecteth me,—the word that I have spoken,—the same shall judge him in the last day.*

P R O P. 2:

'Tis here observed, that, "The scripture quotations," annexed to this article, "clearly shew, that Christ is to be received, and enjoyed only by faith*." This is an

G 3

evasion.

* *Pag. 21.*

evasion from the force of the texts, for the proof of the proposition. Let the reader examine them with attention ; and then let him say if *Mark. xvi. 15, 16.* does not make the *believing* there connected with salvation, to be believing the report of the Gospel from the apostles ?—If *Rom. x. 9, 10.* does not connect *believing*, in the heart, Christ's resurrection, with being saved ?—If verses 16, 17. do not make this *believing* to be the belief of a *report* that is *heard* ?—If *Act. viii. 12.* does not shew us, that the men and women in Samaria were baptized, on believing what Philip declared, concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ ?—If verses 35, 37. do not shew us, that whosoever believe in their hearts, that Jesus Christ is the *son of God* (the *name* preached before, ver. 12. to the Samaritans) may be baptized, as having the faith that accompanies salvation, according to *Mark. xvi. 16* ?—If *1 John. v. 1.* does not shew, that whoever believe Jesus to be the Christ are born of God, according to *John. i. 12, 13. Gal. iii. 26* ?—If *John. xx. 31.* does not shew, that the things which Jesus did were written to prove him to be the son of God ; that his disciples might believe it, and so have eternal life thro' that *name* ?—If *1 Cor. xv. 11.* does not shew, that the faith of the Corinthians was the belief of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, according to the preaching of the Apostles, ver. 2, 3, 4. ?—If *Act. xiii. 48.* with the context, does not shew that such as believed the report published by Paul and Barnabas, were ordained to eternal life ?—If chap. xxviii. 24. does not shew this believing, in it self, to be simply crediting the

Prop. 2. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. 67

truth of the things *spoken*? And if *Heb. x. 39. xi. 1.* do not shew that the *believing* connected with *the saving of the soul*, is being *confident* of the real existence of the good things in expectation, or the evidence that those things *are* which cannot be seen. Well, but the thing these texts “clearly shew, *is*, that Christ is to be received and enjoyed only by faith!”

But this proposition also proves ambiguous : yet the proposition asserts, that the faith it speaks of, is, simply considered, no more than believing the truth of the Gospel revelation. Now where must we search for the ambiguity? Does it lie in the word *believing*? We must not say so; for the proposition says, This believing is most fitly illustrated, from natural things, by the *belief* of any common report; and we all know what it is to credit a report. But perhaps the ambiguity lurks in the phrase, *gospel revelation*? Hardly so either; for it is reckoned the Gospel revelation may be illustrated by any common *report* among men.——But let us hear his own definition of faith without any ambiguity at all.

“If a man, in his whole heart, and in his whole soul, believe without reserve, the sum and substance of the everlasting Gospel; in the truth, life, spirit, and power thereof; the faith of the Gospel is no more.”——I am apt to doubt, before we get good hold of this kind of faith, we shall have the author of the account of it to consult about the import of his words, *sum, substance, truth, life, spirit, and power*. And we may perceive a reason for this doubt when we consider, that many skilful in the art of gathering up these scripture words, and ranging them before their worshippers, occasionally

casionally insinuate them pregnant with some profound meaning, which depend on their mercy to unfold; and again hold them forth with such a shew of simplicity as if they imported no more than a moderate capacity might at first hearing comprehend. But I am willing at present to suppose, that the meaning of this last quotation may be more intelligibly expressed thus: 'If a man, with all his heart, believe the whole import of the Gospel to be truth, life, spirit, and power; the faith of the Gospel includes no more.' And I am ready to acknowledge, that, however confident we may be about our believing the Gospel; yet if we miss its meaning, or esteem it without *life, spirit, and power*, we are but still equal to *unbelievers**.

The comment reminds us of the old objection about Simon the forcerer. Simon was esteemed a believer of what Philip preached as well as others in Samaria; (*Act. viii. 13.*) but it afterwards evidently appeared, that the confession he made of the name of Christ with his mouth did not proceed from the belief of his heart. He had his own interest inclosed in his profession; and he believed a lie when he was professing the belief of the truth. *ver. 20—23.* Simon is one of the commentator's speculative believers, who was verily persuaded, that the things preached by Philip were from God: was he then baptized upon the appearance of a *speculative* faith only? for he was baptized

on

* So a person hearing a story, to which he pretends to give credit; yet taking it up in a light different from the genuine import of the relation, he does not in fact believe the truth of what was reported.

on professing to believe the truth of what Philip spoke. And how was he believing those things spoken by the apostles, and the power accompanying them, to be from God ; while he was thinking the apostles were making a trade, like as he had been doing, of their preaching and power ?

But it seems we have another instance of speculative believers, *John*. viii. 30, 44, 45.—If those Jews who are said to believe ver. 30. are the same that reply ver. 33. then it is plain, that they had not a belief in their hearts answering to what was testified concerning him on whom they are said to believe ; for they neither *understood* Christ's *speech*, nor *heard* his *word*, ver. 43. They were the children of the Devil ; so were liars like their father ; and they believed not the truth, ver. 44, 45, 46. but attempted to stone Jesus as an impostor, ver. 59. And we see how persons may receive the truth, whilst they are ignorant of its meaning, and the consequences attending its profession, *Mat*. xiii. 19—22. But it is not so evident, that those who are said to believe *John* viii. 30. are the same persons who are engaged in the controversy with Jesus in the subsequent part of the chapter.

We have this speculative faith further exemplified, according to the comment, in those persons who, having been miraculously fed by Jesus, said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.* *John* vi. 14. Altho they expected this prophet from the prophecies of the Old-Testament scriptures, respecting his coming ; yet they believed not those scriptures according to the true import of them ; but according to the explanation
of

70 *Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. Prop. 2.*

of their rabbies, and agreeable to their desire to find earthly power and glory shine in a secular Messiah. So they took Jesus, who had shewn miraculous power in feeding them, to be he ; and were forthwith for becoming his subjects, ver. 15. Agreeable to their own notions of *majesty* which they judged fit for their Messiah, and the *plenty* they expected from him, they "laboured" in, "seeking" Jesus after they found he had departed from them, ver. 24. But Jesus pointed out their mistake. He told them that his feeding them with perishing meat was but a sign of the meat he came to give, which was to endure to everlasting life, ver. 27. By speaking of his flesh and blood as the meat and drink he came to give them, he left them to infer His death ; so made himself the truth of the sacrifices brought to their altar and feasted on by their priests and people. This served to damp their expectations from the person they had followed over sea and land for their bread : It drew a cloud over their prospect of such plenty and felicity as they wanted from him, and set them upon reasoning among themselves about the *possibility* of what they had heard. ver. 52. Jesus insisted on the *impossibility* of their having life any other way, ver. 53. and here ended their *speculative* faith, and along with it, the faith of many of his disciples : *This is an hard saying, who can hear it ? — From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* We may take this as an early intimation how the doctrine of the cross, vicarious suffering, and the Deity of Jesus, would be respected by many pretenders to faith in the Messiah in after ages. As this speculative faith gave no credit to what Christ said

said respecting his flesh and blood being given for the life of the world ; so neither did it receive his saying, *I am the bread that came down from heaven.* When they said, *This is of a truth that prophet, &c.* while they apprehended something about him which flattered the corrupt notion they had of their scriptures, they had no such meaning to these words, as that he was the God of their fathers ; for when he told them his incarnation was the truth of the manna with which their fathers were miraculously fed in the wilderness, they murmured at him, and said, *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How is it then he saith, I came down from heaven ?* The belief that Jesus came down from heaven was what had the promise of eternal life at this time : So we see the true disciples professing their faith agreeable to what he had spoken of eternal life, for which others left him : *And we believe, and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* ver. 6. It is now time to observe, that whether we incline to call the faith of these Jews, *speculative*, or by any other name, it was not the belief of what Jesus said to them.

It seems these speculative believers, “ Are verily persuaded that the scripture is a divine revelation, that “ the Gospel is the word of God ; &c*.” Whoever are verily persuaded that the scripture is a divine revelation, and the word of God, from the evidence they see in the scripture, are made wise unto salvation. See *2 Tim. iv. 15. John. v. 46, 47.* But if persons only be-

lieve

lieve the scripture to be a divine revelation because they see such belief generally prevailing ; or because their church holds such an opinion ; or to avoid inconsistency in their belief and keep clear of the odious name of infidels ; such faith is not the persuasion of their hearts, nor rests on any glory they see in the scriptures above the writings of the divine *Socrates* or *Seneca*.

It is observed further, that the faith in question “ Is
 “ not most fitly illustrated from natural things by the
 “ belief of any common report ; ” and this reason given
 for it ; “ For as I have only a common concern in a
 “ common report, I may receive it from a common e-
 “ vidence : even such as could not preponderate with
 “ me, if it were a matter in which I were deeply
 “ interested*.” But this reason is no kind of support
 to the assertion : such a reason must be alledged as will
 shew, that the faith of the Gospel can be more fitly
 illustrated, from natural things, than it can be by the
 belief of a common report. And he may be asked if
 he has a concern beyond others in the report of the
 Gospel ? Or if he can imagine that the word *common*
 was to point out an *uninteresting* report ? Tho’ there be
 no difference between believing any common report,
 and believing the report of the Gospel, but what arises
 from the difference of the facts and the difference of
 their evidence ; yet the proposition does not insinuate
 an equality between the belief of earthly things and
 the belief of heavenly things ; tho’ it says that the one
 may properly be illustrated by the other ; yea, more
 properly

Prop. 2. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. 73

properly than by any other thing taken from nature. But the belief of the Gospel report is supernatural. It is above nature to take in the notion of the Son of God becoming man ; so when Peter made a confession of his faith, which shewed that he knew who Christ was, he receives this answer, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee*. It is beyond nature to understand grace reigning thro' righteousness unto eternal life, where sin reigned unto death :—wheresoever the Gospel is believed, there is the arm of the Lord revealed. *Isa. liii. 1. Rom. x. 16, 17.*

The comment says, “ However affecting the circumstance of a common report, or however strong the evidence may be ; so long as it comes only from fallible creatures ; it is still liable to be disputed : and if I hear a contrary report attended with some shew of evidence ; it may shake my confidence.” Is not this mere trifling ? may not such evidence be afforded from human testimony, as to leave no doubt upon the mind to whom the testimony is exhibited ? And is not the Gospel disputed by many, tho’ it be established on the testimony of God ? Has it not forewarned us of making God a liar ? And how many dispute the truth of the Gospel and perish in their sins ? It is further observed, that, “ The belief of earthly things, is not properly of the same kind, as the belief of heavenly things, *John iii. 12.*” But what has this to do with shewing, that the faith of the Gospel is not most fitly illustrated, from natural things, by the belief of any common report ? And is not Christ, in the text cited, illustrating the belief of heavenly things by the belief of earthly things ?

H

things ? I reckon we must allow that Paul had noticed the fittest things in nature for illustrating his subject, when he said, *So also is the resurrection of the dead* : but should our commentator call this a mistake, and assign as a reason that, “The things Paul alludes to are only “*earthly things*, whereas the resurrection of the dead is “a heavenly thing ;” doubtless his reason would appear worthy of serious regard. But he tells us, he “has “no right to believe a creature, with any stronger evidence, than human testimony can claim *.” And he refers to *Rom. iii. 4.* What end this is to answer I know not, if it be not to shew us that because men oppose the truth of the Gospel therefore their testimony is suspicious in every thing. I however agree, that persons may pretend to believe divine truths ; when their belief is only grounded on human testimony, i. e. the authority of those they most highly respect for devotion and orthodoxy : and that this sort of faith will vanish in time of trial.

“The faith of the operation of God, *it is said*—“is “grounded on the infallible truth of the living God, “written in the heart by the finger of the eternal Spirit ; “and can never be shaken, by any thing within us, or “without us, visible, or invisible, in earth or in hell, “in time or eternity.” These are great words. But they darken the subject, and are words without knowledge, and the effect of rashness and infatuation. Where is the sense in telling us faith cannot be shaken by any thing after time ; when *faith* is ended, and *fight* has

COM-

Prop. 2. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. 75

commenced? for I reckon we must say, when time ends faith issues in sight. And tho' faith fails not, or a real believer ceases not to believe, yet his faith may be shaken, as was the faith of the disciples of Christ by his death, thro' the prejudices of their country men, from which they were not yet free, *Luke. xxiv. 21——26.* and as was the faith of the gentile churches by means of the judaizing teachers *Act. xv. 1, 24. Gal. i. 6, 7. iii. 1. iv. 19.* and was not the epistle to the churches of Galatia written to re-establish them in the faith? The apostle Peter admonishes those who had obtained like precious faith with himself, in the righteousness of his God and Saviour, in this manner, *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 2 Pet. iii. 17.* The reason assigned, and the texts referred to (*Eph. ii. 8. Rom. xi. 29.*) for the truth of the above cited words, have no kind of concern with them. The former of these texts shew us, that the salvation which is by *grace*, thro' faith, is the gift of God: the latter, that in God's *gifts* to the true Israel, and in his *calling* them to the enjoyment of them, he never repents; so they cannot become ineffectual thro' any deficiency in them who *bear* and *receive*. The scriptures referred to at the close of the comment on this proposition * have no relation to the sentence immediately preceding them; yet from these passages we may see that true faith cannot fail; and that the *word of life*, hinted for the relief of our first parents when they had forfeited their life in Eden, *Gen. iii. 15.*

* *Page. 24.*

76 *Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. Prop. 3.*

will be as effectual in enlivening, and keeping alive, the whole predestinated seed with whom Christ took part in flesh and blood ; as the command, *Gen. i. 28.* has been effectual to set forward the course of nature and produce all the generations of men, from Adam : —That the disciples of Jesus were assured of his being the Son of God : and that, the anointing experienced by the disciples when Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, answered in all things to the truth they before believed, and was no delusion.

It would seem the commentator does not care to deny flatly the definition of faith given in the Proposition. He rather admits it : but yet his heart evidently fails him, when he sees the truth standing so naked. Tho' he seems to admit the fact, that, Faith is the belief of the truth* ; yet he has at hand a train of qualifying expressions, which serve, at once, to amuse us and to veil the naked truth, as some way not fit to bear the light.

P R O P. 3.

This Proposition is roundly denied in the comment. —“ The christian hope is not an expectation of

* But we have not yet seen what notion he has of the truth ; or what he intends by the sum and substance of the Gospel, in the life, truth, spirit, and power of it. Perhaps the substance of the Gospel may turn out a message, That *I am a child of God* : so if I do not believe this, there is a “ reserve ” in my faith—it does not comprehend the *substance* of the Gospel.

“ being

“being interested in the good things revealed in the Gospel.” And then we are very plainly told what the christians hope is.—“It is, the certain expectation of the enjoyment of the blessings, arising from the assurance of our interest therein, thro’ our relation to Christ.” Leaving out one sentence of the above definition, the Proposition and the comment agree. But that sentence is in the bowels of the description ; or it is the soul of it ; so it would be rude work to draw it out. It is this, “Arising from the assurance of our interest therein.” Now as the Christian’s hope springs from his assurance of an interest in the blessings of the Gospel, the commentator will be very far from admitting any person into the number of his christians who wants that *assurance of interest* ; for he tells us that the scriptures quoted in the proposition, “do plainly shew that Christians do enjoy a blessed hope.” And this blessed hope arises from the assurance of their interest ——. The proof of this we must seek for in *Rom. viii. 25. 2 Tim. i. 12. Tit. ii. 13. Heb. vi. 19.* The design of the Apostle in the first of those passages, is to note the peculiar distinguished fruit or effect of *hope*, in those who are possessed of it ; that is, *patience*. And we may well suppose those words written to the church at Rome, in view of their apostatizing from the *cross of Christ*, and putting on the form of a kingdom of this world ; leading into captivity, and killing with the sword, in opposition to the patience of the saints, in bearing the afflictions of the Gospel, in expectation of an heavenly kingdom, and a crown of glory in the world to come. *Rev. xiii. 10.* Accordingly in ver. 29. they are told of the *prede-*

stration unto a conformity to Christ in his sufferings, in this world, to prevent them from indulging the thought of finding any other way to the place where Jesus is gone. According to this text, if our patiently bearing the cross after Christ keep no proportion with our talking about the certainty of our expectation of blessedness in the next world, we are only deceiving ourselves with a hope that will perish. In the context Paul does not distinguish himself from the weakest believer, whilst he shews how we enjoy the comfort of salvation, when yet groaning under the effects of sin. And the substance of the 25th verse is this; If we are indeed hoping for what lies beyond our sight, it will appear by our patiently waiting for it: But in neither the text, nor context, does he give any hint that the assurance of our own salvation, in particular, is essential to the existence of hope.

It may be here observed, in opposition to the commentator's idle jargon about his assurance, that, all that is necessary to give being to the lively hope of an incorruptible never-fading inheritance in heaven, is, crediting the scripture testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

In 2 *Tim.* i. 12. Paul speaks of himself as an *apostle*; and he mentions his not being *ashamed* of his *sufferings* which came on that account: he also gives the reason why he is not ashamed: *For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.* And this shews us to be sure, very plainly, that a person cannot have hope towards God before he is assured of his own
 interest

interest in the blessings of the Gospel? The same apostle says, chap. iv. 8.— *There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day.* And if the commentator can only persuade us, that the highest assurance of hope which the apostles had, or that assurance which Paul expressed when he had finished his course, and when the time of his departure was at hand, is essential to christianity, he will at the same time remove our objections to his doctrine of assurance: yet there are two things I have to notice here which the commentator may reckon favourable to his assurance if he chooses. The first is, that, when the apostles say,— *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ,* they set themselves forth as patterns of experience to all christians. Secondly, every one who commits the keeping of his soul to God must be firmly persuaded of the divine power to keep it, notwithstanding the power of all the opposers of his salvation, and the sufferings he may be exposed to.

From *Heb.* vi. 19. we may see, that those who believe in the atonement and intercession of Jesus the eternal High Priest, who is entered into *heaven itself**, by the blood of his own offering, have that eternal blessedness into which he is entered, as the *anchor of their souls*, to hold them against the various opposition they meet with in *the race which is set before them*, and which keeps them from being carried away of ungodly lusts. This heavenly inheritance being made *sure* to the heirs of

* Chap. i. 3. iv. 14. vi. 20. viii. 1. ix. 12, 24. x. 12. xii. 2.

promise,

promise, yields *strong consolation* against the fear of perishing, to them who believe, and who are accordingly *flying for refuge*. But then, the apostle is not saying any such thing, as that Every one who has this hope, as the anchor of his soul, is assured that he in particular shall not perish, but certainly enter after Jesus the forerunner into the promised blessedness, made sure to all the chosen seed. So far is he from this, that, in the same chapter, ver. 10, 11. he supposes there were believers who had not such assurance; and so gives them direction how to attain it.

It appears from *Tit. ii. 13.* that all who are taught of the Gospel to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; are taught to do these things in the view of another world; and so to look for the glorious appearing of their Saviour Jesus Christ; but it does not appear that those who deny ungodliness, &c. in expectation of the Lord's appearance, assuredly know, from the very commencement of that expectation, that they shall be taken into his glory when he appears. The text does not suggest any such thought.

We are informed that the hope of the religious world is, "a vague expectation," and its language is, "Who can tell." And without doubt the hope of the proposition and the hope of the religious world are the same, in the view of the commentator. It is however not necessary to stop for considering how far this description of the hope of the religious world, bespeaks the author's attention to the scripture, where this subject is frequently treated on; yet a moderate survey of what the scripture

ture

ture says on this point may lead us to say, Our commentator has given a very "vague" account of the hope of the religious world : at least we may say that he had been as near the truth had he told us, Their hope is a confident expectation, that God will regard them for their religion above those who have none*. But the text referred to, *1 Thes. i. 10.* deserves particular notice. The words are, *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.* The doctrine which is wanted from this text seems to be this ; Every one who is not assured that he is delivered from the wrath to come, is as far below a Christian as earth is below heaven. All that with any modesty can be inferred from this text, in favour of such a doctrine, is, that the apostles knew for themselves that they were delivered from the wrath to come ; and that the same charity which led the apostles to join the Thessalonians with them, in the belief of what they preached concerning God's Son, from their profession, led them also to consider the Thessalonians as joined with themselves in deliverance from wrath, connected with that belief ; but this is the same as inferring nothing in favour of it. Philip was led by even a greater certainty than any mans profession to call Saul his brother, *Act. ix. 17.* He was informed by the Lord, in a vision, that Saul prayed, and was a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name before the Gentiles and the Jews ; but sure no man would infer from hence that Saul was assured of his salvation from the instant
he

* Luke xviii, 9——13.

82 Mr. Johnson's *Comment considered.* Prop. 3.

he begun to pray. And I think it need scarcely be observed that he could not pray without *a good hope*.

Notwithstanding what the commentator has observed concerning the hope of the religious world, I shall here take the liberty to say, that, Many reputed believers of the Gospel are ready to join him in this, that all who can with propriety be denominated believers must be assured of their own salvation : this, or something like it, they call *faith*. When they have liberty to speak out the language of their faith freely, it amounts to “ this: Christ loved ME and gave himself for ME.” And their hope is something of the same kind which they are not yet agreed how to distinguish from faith. Accordingly the comment informs us, that, “ Hope is no “ other thing than faith, considered in a certain branch “ or mode*.” And again, “ Hope in the heart, is a “ certain degree or measure of faith †.” In opposition to this the apostle says, faith, hope, and charity are THREE ‡ : And hope is as distinct from faith, as a persons expecting to arrive at a certain place to which he is travelling, is from his believing, on information, there is such a place. The commentator says, “ When “ faith and hope are distinguished then——” But we ought first to know where the scripture makes them the same : Or shall we sit quietly down and conclude they are occasionally confounded or distinguished in the scripture because they are so in the comment. Well, and when they are distinguished, what then ? Why then, “ By *hope* we understand *belief* of his promise to us.” And where must we find this promise to us ?---

* Page 24. † Page 38. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Prop. 3. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered 83

If he can any where find a promise made to himself, then, notwithstanding his assurance of hope must commence with his faith, yet the belief of the promise must be faith, not hope. But this may be thought to be proceeding too fast: We are told, "The peculiar promises are made only to Christ's sheep." And how then must we know that we are Christ's sheep, that we may appropriate the promises to ourselves, or have hope? We must know this by our being "manifestly the children of God." How is it manifest we are the children of God? "By faith." What is faith? "The belief of the truth." What is the truth we are to believe? "That Christ will save us*." Thus we are brought again to the "promise to us:" And those who choose the labor, may search for it where they think it is most likely to be found. It is however plain enough from the scripture that men become the children of God by faith; but no where does it appear that believers are assured of their relation as children on the commencement of that relation.

* Mr. *Johnson*, contending with one who maintained faith in Christ to be a duty, required by what he calls the moral law, introduces an argument from this his antagonist, which is expressed thus; "Because Christ is true God, men are obliged to believe in him to the saving of the soul." To this Mr. *Johnson* replies, "But it does not follow as a consequence, that because it is the duty of all men to believe in Christ's God Head, and honour him as they honour the Father; therefore, it is the duty of all men to believe *that Christ will save them*, or to be blessed with supernatural faith in him." *Faith of God's elect. pag. 132.*

But

But we are told, "It is impossible to hope for the inheritance, unless we know our relation, as children." Every one who hopes for the inheritance in heaven must have some kind of knowledge for the ground of his hope, and his hope must equally respect his heirship; so it must be impossible for any to hope for the inheritance and not at the same time hope he is a son. But it is not true that the *assurance* of our being sons is essential to our having hope. In *Rom. viii. 17.* to which the comment refers, the apostle says, Those who are *children*, suffering with Christ, are *heirs* of God's inheritance; and in the foregoing verses he shews how they come to the knowledge or assurance of their being children and heirs: This is by the testimony of two witnesses, the *Spirit itself* (which is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of adoption) and *our spirit*. These jointly bear witness that we are the children of God: and so we know it thereby; and not by our first believing the truth. And *Gal. iv. 7.* shews the same thing. It shews that those who are God's sons are his heirs, thro' their connexion with his *only begotten Son*, the heir of all He has. *John. i. 18. iii. 16, 35. Heb. i. 2.* In the preceding verse the apostle again shews how the Sons of God come to the knowledge of their sonship: *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Thus we see that the sons of God have the Spirit of adoption *after* the Spirit of faith.

As a further prop to the commentator's appropriating

ing faith, he ſays, "The ſoul believes on the Son of
"God according to the divine record. 1 *John*. v. 11. *"
True. But it would ſeem before the ſoul enjoys the com-
mentator's faith it muſt learn to lay an emphasis upon the
word *us*, in the text: it muſt perceive God bearing
record, that it, in particular, has eternal life: ſo it
"thereby becomes poſſeſſed of eternal life." But does
not John by the *us* here, intend all whom Chriſt repre-
ſented on the croſs; when he came *by water and blood*†,
to confirm the New Teſtament by which they have e-
ternal life from the dead †? Does he not intend all of
every nation that believe what God has teſtified con-
cerning his Son—all that were given him of the Father,
that he ſhould give unto them eternal life? That which
men believe, when they become poſſeſſed of eternal
life, is *the record that God gave of HIS SON*, ver. 10.—
The apoſtle, in the text, ſays, *This Life is in HIS SON*.
And, as this record reſpects the SON, it muſt reſpect him
as connected with all for whoſe offences he was deliver-
ed, and for whoſe juſtification he was raiſed again†. And
the record which God has given of him ſhews what we
are to believe concerning him. So then, if we believe
on the Son of God according to the divine record, we
ſhall believe the plain facts ſet forth in that record||,
and no more. And ſo we have eternal life. And that
we may *know* we believe and have the ſame eternal

* Page. 25.

† 1 *John* v. 6, 8. *John* xix. 34, 35.

† *Heb.* ix. 18, 19, 20. *Exo.* xxiv. 6, 7, 8. *Mar.* xiv.
24. † *Rom.* viii. 33, 34. *John* xiv. 20. xv. 5. xvii. 23.
|| *Mat.* iii. 17. xvii. 5. 2 *Pet.* i. 17. *Mat.* xxvii. 50,
54. *Rom.* i. 3, 4. 1 *John* chap. i.

life which the Son has, it is necessary we consult this whole epistle. See ver, 13.

The commentator, speaking of the believer being assured of his interest in the mediator, &c. adds, "And of this strong consolation, he cannot fail; being possessed of the Spirit of adoption." Those indeed cannot fail of the additional consolation, which Jesus promised to his disciples, in keeping his commandments, *John* xiv. 21, 24. who enjoy the testimony of the Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption; but *Rom.* viii. 15. does not shew us that every one who has strong consolation in believing the truth, has, from thence, the spirit bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. Paul says, *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* And then he appeals to the experience of all who had been led by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, if they had not received the promised blessing? *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Let us now hear the commentator give us another description of hope. "The hope of a believer, is an unshaken dependence on the infallible promise of Jehovah. *Rom.* iv. 21." We have heard hope called such an expectation as arises from an assurance of interest in Christ; also faith, in a certain branch, mode, or degree; and the belief of God's promise to us: here, it is an unshaken dependence on the promise: afterwards,

we

we are told, It is God Himself, in the stability of his promise*. But not to forget the *unshaken dependence*; one would, at first, think it strange to be referred to *Rom. iv. 21.* where the apostle speaks as expressly of faith as was possible for him to speak: *He staggered not at the promise of God thro' unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* But he can readily tell us, Hope is a mode or degree of faith; and they are not to be distinguished here: And so Paul had *hope* and *dependence* in view when he said *Therefore it was counted, &c?* But this talk serves to undermine Paul's scheme of salvation as much as any thing his rivals in the churches of Galatia had to say about circumcision and the law of Moses. In the above passage cited from *Rom. chap. iv.* The apostle speaks of neither Abraham's *hope*, nor his *dependence*; but of his *belief* or persuasion of the truth of what he heard from God, and of His power to perform all that He had said. But in ver. 18. he speaks of Abraham's hope, and distinguishes it from his faith: *Who against hope BELIEVED in HOPE, &c.* Abraham's faith was the ground of his hope: and he had nothing else whereon to found an expectation of becoming a father: nay every thing in nature stood against any such expectation; as *His own body now dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb.* In this we have a pattern of the faith and hope of the Gospel, which are neither separated nor confounded in the scriptures.

The author of the Proposition still thinks the scriptures annexed to it, make it abundantly evident that the hope of the Gospel is an expectation of interest in the good things revealed therein. Hope and expectation are terms of the same import. And when we look to *Heb. xi. 1.* we are informed that *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, i. e. by faith we are confident there are such things; and by hope we expect the enjoyment of them. If we turn to *Tit. i. 1, 2, 3.* we may see that the faith of God's elect is the belief of the truth concerning Christ, set forth in the apostolic testimony to be believed* with the heart unto righteousness, and acknowledged with the mouth unto salvation; and the benefit arising from this faith is an expectation of coming to the enjoyment of that eternal life, set forth in the word of faith, as the promise of God that cannot lie, to Christ and all his seed. When we look forward to chap. iii. 7. we have again the same view of hope—*The expectation of eternal life*—mentioned as the common enjoyment of all who are justified by grace, and children or heirs of God. In *Col. i 23.* faith seems to include both believing, and that which is believed; so *hope* in the same text must include both hoping, and that which is hoped for: And as Christians continue in the faith, by continuing to believe † what the Gospel declares; so they continue to hope for what is promis-

* See *John xvii. 20. Rom. x. 14, 15. Tit. i. 3.*

† *John vi. 69.* at once shews us, that the disciples who continued with Jesus keep steadfast in the faith of his being the Son of God; and that those who left him gave it up as a falsehood.

Prop. 4. Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. 89

ed therein, and, so continuing, are *not moved away from the hope of the Gospel*; as every professor must be who is moved away from the work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope. When we look to *Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.* we see the apostle making mention of *one God and Father—one Lord Jesus—one Holy Spirit—one faith—one hope—one baptism*: and all these are mentioned as having a peculiar relation to *one body*, the members of which are children of the one Father, subject to the one Lord, animated by the one Spirit, baptized into the one body, believing one truth, and EXPECTING one eternal life and glory: This is the *hope* belonging to the one body, not to be confounded with the one *faith*. In *1 Cor. xv. 19.* Paul supposes all Christians, in their measure, bearing the afflictions of the Gospel, or suffering with Christ; but comforted under the same by the expectation of a resurrection to eternal life—the expectation of the glory which lies at the end of the sufferings of this present time.

The scripture sets the Christian hope in no other light. And if we take it in this light, we must be straitned in saying that the commentator has his view of the Christian hope from the scripture.

P R O P. 4.

The commentator is here at a loss to understand what should be intended by the *author of the truth*. He says, “Truth’s author I do not understand.”—Does he understand *Jesus*, when he says, *But now ye seek to kill me a man that hath told you THE TRUTH which I heard of God?*—Does he understand *himself*, when he says,

"Hence to ascribe saving wisdom to the scriptures, is
 "to ascribe it as the author of the scriptures has done*?"
 We have seen how his notes on the former Proposition
 tend to destroy the distinction between faith and hope;
 and here we have it insinuated that the scripture makes
 no distinction between the *Three* that bear record in
 heaven, and the *fact* which their record respects. That
 we may loose sight of this distinction we are referred to
John xvii. 3. *1 Cor.* viii. 6. *Eph.* iv. 21. *1 John* v. 6.
 The three first of these texts need, I think, no remarks:
 In the last, we have these words; *And it is the Spirit that*
beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. The Spirit,
 as here distinguished from the Holy Ghost, is not to be
 taken for his Person, but for the Gospel preached by
 the apostles with the Holy Ghost sent down from hea-
 ven, which is the spirit and truth of the Old Testa-
 ment†, and one of the *three* which bear witness on the
 earth, that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; the great
 TRUTH to which the Holy Ghost, with the Father
 and the word, bear record in heaven. Jesus Christ
 calls himself *the Truth* (*John* xiv. 6.) as being *the end of*
the law, the great intent and meaning of Moses and
 all the prophets, and in whom the laws, figures, and
 prophecies of the Old Testament had their accomplish-
 ment.

If the Proposition has given a clumsy unintelligible
 account of charity, we have these defects supplied in the

* *Occasional review*, &c. page. 33.

† See *John* i. 17. iv. 23. *2 Cor.* iii. 6, 7, 8. *1 John*
 v. 8.

Comment which affords us a more accurate and perspicuous description.—Let us hear the description.—“I also know, that evangelical charity is the pure love of God, in Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. *Rom. v. 1.*” On this I have only to observe here, that a person may have true charity before he has the experience of that *shedding abroad* of which the apostle speaks in the text quoted*.

In the chapter referred to in the Proposition, Paul is purposely treating on charity; and he gives us a particular description of it. Paul classes *charity* with *faith* and *hope*; yet gives it the pre-eminence. These *three* all exist in men by means of revelation: They are all closely connected with it and mutually refer to it. The import of all that is revealed in the scripture is collected in the testimony of God concerning his Son, *Mat. iii. 17.* *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And all that is written in the scripture serves to lead us into the import of these words; or to explain, illustrate, and prove the truth contained in them. Charity is the love of this truth, even as faith is the belief of it. So Paul says, *Charity—rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in THE TRUTH.* This shews us what charity is, or in what it consists: And it is stamped with the character of God's dear Son:—*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,—beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.*

* Compare *Luk. xi. 13. John iv. 10. vii. 37, 38, 39. Act. ii. 23. v. 32. xix. 2.*

92 *Mr. Johnson's Comment considered. Prop. 6.*

It appears also from this chapter, that men may be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and exercise his gifts for the edification of the body of Christ, and yet be destitute of charity.

Charity, in us, is the effect of his word whose essence is Love. 1 *John* iv. 7, 8. But if we go about to make it any other thing than love to, and delight in, the truth revealed from heaven; or to the author of that truth, from his amiable character exhibited therein; or to all the genuine professors of the truth, or the institutions it contains for the mutual exercise and manifestation of charity; it cannot appear that we are taking out notions of charity from Paul, or any inspired writer.

P R O P. 5.

Tho' it does not appear that the author of the Propositions and his commentator exactly tally in their notions here; yet, as the Proposition is express and particular already, it does not appear necessary to take the subject into further consideration at present. It will however be necessary for those who find themselves interested in it, to attend to the scriptures referred to both in the Proposition and in the comment upon it.

P R O P. 6.

It seems the commentator cannot gather any sense out of this Proposition unless he first be allowed to mend it. And he has given us a specimen of the amendment which is wanted. The author of the Proposition can have no pretension to insinuate, that the mind
of

of the scripture could not have been better expressed than he has done upon the subject; but he does not see that the amendment made in the comment answers this purpose. The words substituted in the comment, in place of those which are unintelligible in the proposition, seem to glance at *John* xiv. 26. But in this text Christ promises a blessing to those who had already the true *principle of Grace* in them: all the principle of grace which they had after they received the promised blessing, they had before.

The Proposition begins thus, "I know nothing about
" any principle of grace in believers but what is im-
" ported in their name. (believers.) And then it proceeds
to notice the import of their name; " viz. the word of
" the Gospel being and abiding in them, by its standing
" true in their consciences." Now, without all doubt,
it is quite unintelligible to say, that the name *believers*,
which is given to Christians imports their believing the
Gospel:—To speak of the Gospel *standing true in the*
conscience seems to be speaking words without any
meaning; or if we may suppose the writer had any
meaning of his own, or which he learned from Palæmon,
we cannot easily take that meaning to be the same with
the apostles when they speak of *believing in the heart*.
But if it may help the commentator to understand the
intention of the Proposition, the author of it is willing
to set it before him in other words. He will then say,
There is no principle of grace in men but the Gospel;
and the Gospel is no otherwise a principle of grace in
in them than as the evidence of its coming from God
is imprinted on their hearts.

The

The commentator here concludes, "There can be
 " no grace, or spiritual principle in any soul, but one
 " of these, viz. either the fulness of Christ;—commu-
 " nicated immediately from himself;—or else,—those
 " —fruits of the spirit, which naturally proceed from
 " *the* divine communication." And the fulness of Christ
 is said to consist in "Light, truth, life, love, power,
 " peace, joy, &c." But the bare exhibition of this
 cluster of expressions, tho' it may amuse our fancy very
 agreeably, yet can never tend to inform our judgments
 about *grace*. And to deal fairly with him here, he ap-
 pears to me to be rather trying his skill in philosophy
 and vain deceit, than leading us to the simple truth con-
 cerning the grace of God and the fulness of Christ.
 There can be no kind of knowledge more interesting to
 mankind than the knowledge of the *grace* of the scrip-
 tures. And if we do not know what the grace of God
 is, which is so frequently mentioned in the scriptures,
 or rather, which is the main scope of all the scriptures,
 it is a vain thing to be pretending to, or inquiring after,
 a principle of grace in our hearts. We may be very seri-
 ously employed in searching for this principle, and labor
 hard to satisfy ourselves that we are really possessed of
 it, and after all die destitute of the knowledge of divine
 grace. The scripture gives us many alarming hints of
 this nature. *I/a. v. 11.*

Our commentator has been long labouring (fervently
 no doubt) to exalt *grace*, and set it in a very high point
 of light. In doing this he has refined some human
 schemes of grace, and struck out what was most obnox-

ous and grating to human pride*. But those who are in earnest about their own salvation will find but little satisfaction, or solid ground of comfort, in any of the various schemes of grace they may be furnished with, except that only which is exhibited in the scripture, of which all the rest are only counterfeits.

The highest notion of God's grace that is given us in the scriptures, is, His giving a commandment to His Son to lay down his life and to take it again†, that all for whom he died and rose again might be delivered from wrath and have eternal life from the dead‡. This the apostle calls the law of the spirit of life in Christ, which makes free from the law of sin and death ||. The LAW which said, *The man that doth these things shall live in them*; and, *curst is every one that continueth not*, †. was given by Moses to the nation of Israel; and the perpetual declaration of this law was *the ministration of condemnation and death*: But the GRACE which placed a divine Person under the law, to fulfil it for sinners and redeem them from its curse, by being made a curse for them, *came by Jesus Christ*; and the continual proclamation of this in the gospel is *the ministration of righteousness*. The law which was given by Moses had a

* See his *Evangelical truths vindicated*, Page 13—33. also his *Election of God undisguised*.——and Preface to a Pamphlet lately published, entitled, *The two opinions tried, &c.*

† John x. 18. vi. 38. ‡ John vi. 39, 40, 54. x. 11, 15, 28. || Rom. viii. 2. † Lev. xviii. 5. Dut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10, 12.

shadow

shadow of the grace to come by Christ, in the various sacrifices, purifications, &c. and in what it said of visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children: In this view Paul calls it the *letter*, in the same place where he calls it *the ministration of condemnation*. And in this view *truth* is said to come by Jesus Christ in the same text where *grace* is said to come by him: This *truth* Paul calls the *spirit*, opposing it to the *letter*, where he opposes *the ministration of condemnation* to *the ministration of righteousness*.

The apostle Peter includes *the true grace of God*, of which he speaks, 1 *Pet.* v. 12. in the *sufferings* of Christ and the *glory* following these sufferings, chap. i. 10, 11, 12, 13. And he says it was prophesied of before it came. When he breaths after the perfection, stability, and settlement of Christians in the course of their sufferings, he at the same time shews them from whence these blessings were to come, even from *the God of all grace*, who gave Christ to *suffer* and then received him into his *glory*. And he gives us the same view of *the true grace*, when it was corrupted by the Judaizers, mixing it with the works of the law, *Act.* xv. 11. *But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.* And this agrees with the notion of grace given us by Paul in opposition to the same corruption, *Gal.* i. 6. *I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel.* Chap. ii. 21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain.* 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he*
was

6. *Prop. 6. Mr. Johnſon's Comment conſidered.* 97

was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And in chap. v. 19, 20, 21. vi. 1. he makes the *Grace of God* to be His *reconciling the world unto Himſelf in Chriſt*; and making him to be *ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.*—He calls the *holy place* into which Jeſus is entered, by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption, *the throne of Grace*, *Heb. iv. 16.* And, *by the Grace of God* he was made lower than the angels, and became a perfect ſaviour through *ſuffering death*, bringing many ſons unto *glory*. Many of the Jews and religious proſelytes, at Antioch, received Paul's doctrine of *forgivenenſs* and juſtification, through the death and reſurrection of the *man Jeſus*; and Paul and Barnabas perſuading them to continue in the doctrine they had received, called it *the grace of God*, *Act. xiii. 38. 39, 43.* And the Goſpel, which is the good news of God manifeſt in the fleſh, that thro' death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death and ſave his people, is called *the Goſpel of the grace of God*, *Act. xx. 24.*

This is the grace by which men are ſaved and juſtified, *Eph. ii. 5, 7, 8. Tit. iii. 7. Rom. iii. 24. Gal. v. 4.* and which affords a good hope to all the believers of it, *2 Theſ. ii. 16.* abounding more than ſin, and reigning through righteouſneſs unto eternal life. This grace has no reſpect to what is amiable and reputable, or baſe and diſhonourable, among mankind; but proceeds, thro' righteouſneſs, to ſave from death, and bring to glory, all who were predeſtinated thereto from eternity. *Rom. viii. 29, 30. ix. 15, 16, 23. xi. 5. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.* The ſcripture always leads

us to Jesus Christ and him crucified for the true notion of grace. It teaches us that the divine grace is fully manifested in Christ Jesus, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. In a word, we have a full view of the *divine grace* to men, in the gift of a divine Person for their redemption, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. And this is the grace which shines in the New Testament. But that which shews our conformity to the divine grace gets the name of *grace* in the writings of the apostles:—The *liberality* of the Christians is so called by Paul. *2 Cor.* viii. 6, 7, 19.—The *Gifts* which Christ bestowed after he ascended up on high, to be exercised in joining together, and edifying, the New-Testament Church, are also called *grace*. *Eph.* iv. 7, 8, 11. iii. 7, 8. *Rom.* xii. 3, 6. xv. 15, 16. *1 Cor.* xv. 10.

Now we may, according to all the New Testament, say, That the grace of God which bringeth salvation, is the principle of every good work, and of every good disposition. It is the good will of God in Christ towards sinners of mankind: and every heart it enters, it changes into its own likeness. What I mean by its entering the heart, is, its being *believed in the heart*.

P R O P. 7.

Sanctifying is making holy. And this is either by separating to a holy use, or cleansing from iniquity. In the former of these senses Christ was sanctified, and sent into the world. *John* x. 36.—God is sanctified by those who fear him and approach unto him. *Lev.* x.

3. *Isa.* viii. 13. xxix. 23. *Mat.* vi. 9. 1 *Pet.* iii. 15. and we see how all the persons and things pertaining to the Old-Testament ministry were sanctified. In both these senses the Church of God is sanctified by the blood of the everlasting covenant, thro' which Christ was brought again from the dead. *Heb.* xiii. 12, 20. 1 *Pet.* ii. 9. Christ gave himself for his Church that he might sanctify and cleanse it from sin, *Eph.* v. 26. and Paul says to the Corinthians, — *such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified*, chap. vi. 11.

The sanctification of believers consists in the purification of their hearts from an evil conscience, that they may draw near unto God, whose name is HOLY. *Heb.* x. 22. This is the TRUE sanctification: and it also consists in the purification of their hearts from evil dispositions and affections. 1 *Thes.* iv. 3, 4.

This sanctification takes place in the hearts of sinners by the Gospel. And frequently the above two fold view of it is included in the same passage; as where Jesus says, *John* xv. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* chap. xvii. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* ver. 19. *And for their sakes I sanctify my self, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.* Paul speaking of that pride in the heart of man, which is the spring of all disobedience to God and malignity to men, says, *Tit.* iii. 3—5. *For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which*

we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And he tells the Ephesians, that Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water **BY THE WORD**. When the apostles shew us how the consciences of sinners are purified, and they imboldened to draw near unto the true holiest of all, they point at nothing, save the bare atonement of the great High Priest who is gone into heaven:—How much more shall the **BLOOD OF CHRIST**, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. Having therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by **THE BLOOD OF JESUS**,—let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. chap. x. 19, 22.—When he had by himself purged our sins, chap. i. 3.—the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 7. The consciences of sinners can be thus sanctified and cleansed, to draw nigh unto God, **ONLY** by believing what the Gospel declares concerning the great propitiation for sin. So Paul was sent to open the eyes of the Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus, *Act.* xxvi. 18. And Peter, speaking of faith as abolishing all distinctions upon which the Jew might value himself above the Gentile, says, *Act.* xv. 8, 9. And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, even as he did unto us : and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts BY FAITH.

According to the scripture, it is the same thing to be sanctified by the truth, and to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost. No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 3. He is the *Spirit of faith* who raised up the Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14. The *Spirit of holiness*, who declared him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4.—The *Spirit of truth* who dwelleth with those that believe, John. xiv. 17. 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. 1 Thes. i. 5. 2 Thes. ii. 12, 14. Every one, then, who believes the truth has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, as the Spirit of faith. There is no separating the influence of the Spirit from believing the truth.

Those who believe that God is well pleased in *the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once* (Heb x. 9. 10.) must understand something of the effect of this faith in purifying them from evil affections; accordingly Peter says, *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.* 1 Pet. i. 22. And John says, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

P R O P. 8.

It is a wide inference from Act. vi. 1. James ii. 15. 16. 1 John iii. 17. that poverty excuses Christians altogether from ministering to the saints, and the poor,

in *Alms-giving*. See *Luk.* xxi. 1—5. *Mark* xii. 41—44.
2 *Cor.* viii. 2.

P R O P. 9.

The comment on this Proposition begins with observing, “It is an undeniable truth, that the Christian’s joy has its existence *alone in the Lord*.*” It is a very ridiculous excercise to strive about words ; and it is severely censured in the scripture.—But, on the other hand, we ought to guard against all forms of expression which serve to confound our ideas concerning the christian faith and experience. The above words, cited from the comment, seem to involve a contradiction ; for when we speak of the “Christian’s joy” we must necessarily suppose that joy to exist *in the Christian*, agreeable to the comment on the former proposition : “Joy exists *in the heart thro’ the belief of the truth*†.” We can easily conceive how a person is made *joyful or sorrowful* by hearing some important news, well attested, of common or universal concern. This is a proper representation of the *joy* caused in the heart of a sinner, by the Gospel, as soon as he hears and believes it. The Gospel is good news from heaven. In the above representation we can also easily conceive how far it is from the person to contribute any thing towards obtaining his joy--how entirely it depends on providence. It is just so as to *the joy of faith*. Neither our *will* nor our *work* has any kind of concern in helping us to the

* Page. 31. † Page. 30.

joy of the Gospel. It depends entirely on the will of God ; and it surprises us unawares. So if no more is intended by the Christian's joy having its existence alone in the Lord, than its first coming to a sinner from the Lord alone ; without looking for, or seeking after, in any shape, and wholly depending on the belief of the words which the Lord has spoken for its existence in his heart ; this is what the Proposition supposes : But if the intention be to instruct us, That the Christian may have no abatement of joy and comfort, tho' he at times indulge those worldly and sinful dispositions which Christ has commanded to be mortified ; and, on the other hand, may fulfil the royal law, in following after charity——holding fast the name of Christ and loving his brethren in DEED, and in TRUTH ; and yet not experience his *consolation abound* ; I say, if this be the intended instruction, it is a most pernicious and ungodly scheme of doctrine. But in the next page the commentator seems to speak otherwise, as I shall just now observe.

It seems, “ The texts quoted in the Proposition, do “ not prove, that the Christian's growth in confidence “ and hope in the divine grace, has a *dependence* on his “ love and obedience.” Well, what do they prove then ? Why they “ clearly point out, that love to Christ, “ obedience to his new commandments, &c. are “ means appointed by the Lord ; not so properly of “ establishing us in hope and confidence ; as of enlarg- “ ing us in knowledge, joy, and delight in the Lord, &c.” Now I think we must say, If we want the *appointed means* we are not to expect the blessings which come by those means ;

means; or our enjoyment of the blessings have a *dependence* on our being found in the means. And according to the scripture, enlargement in *knowledge, joy, and delight* in the Lord, has the closest connexion, and keeps exact pace, with encreasing in the hope of being at last found in Christ: Accordingly Paul thus speaks of himself.—*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:—and do count them but dung that I may win Christ: and be found in him,——that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* Phil. iii. 8—11. In 2 Pet. i. 11. to which the comment refers, to lead us to the proper notion of *enlargement in knowledge, &c.* The apostle is evidently speaking of the end of this present time; of the glory which comes after suffering is ended; even the same glory which Jesus had an abundant entrance into, when he sat down on his throne, and of which the same apostle speaks, 1 Pet. iv. 13. *But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.* And if the earnest of this glorious kingdom be also included, then this blessing yields the Christian the assurance of hope that he shall enter into the kingdom, the joy of his Lord, which assurance he did not enjoy before.

Let us now consider the texts referred to in the Proposition. The first is *John* xiv. 21. In ver. 20. Jesus says, *At that day ye shall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.* The day here spoken of was the day when the Holy Ghost, as the comforter,

was

was sent from the Father, *Act. ii. 1.* before which day the disciples of Jesus did not enjoy the *spirit of adoption*. —*Ye shall KNOW that I am in the Father*. This must signify their knowing him to be the Father's beloved Son. —*And you in me*. — Hereby they were to know their relation to him as brethren and heirs, so included in the same love of the Father as his sons. — *and I in you*. This must intend their love being perfected, by the enjoyment of that same love from Jesus which he enjoyed from the Father. The expressions plainly respect the mutual love and union between Jesus, his Father in heaven, and his brethren and disciples on earth. Thus they had the promise of knowing, by *experience*, what they were then *believing*. Before the day when the promise was accomplished they *believed* that Jesus was the Christ, the beloved Son of God, and they were *hoping* they had an interest in the same love. But *at that day*, they were to *know* this, by partaking with Jesus in the *comfort* he received after his sufferings. Christ further says, *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*. Our obedience to the commandments of Christ stands here as the peculiar token of our love to him. And this must remain to the end of the world, the test of every man's sincerity who professes to be a Christian :—*and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to him*. The promise of love here, is to that love which proves itself genuine by keeping the commandments of Jesus, that is, his new commandment of brotherly love. *John xiii. 34.* This manifestation promised, was a manifestation suitable to his glorified state ; such

a manifestation of himself as might give them a taste of the glory which he had received from the father. Judas inquires in what way this manifestation should come : *Lord how is it thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the world?* ver. 22. *Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,* ver. 23. So the manifestation comes in the way of *keeping his commandments*—*keeping his words*. Keeping the commandments of Christ is the true proof of love to him, being the true effect of that love ;—it is at the same time, the way in which that love is perfected. Accordingly we find they strictly observed these sayings of Jesus after he left them.—The apostles *all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*--*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* *Act.* i. 14. ii. 1. And so they received the promise ; and began testifying with boldness that God was well pleased in his Son ; that he had raised him from the dead, and made him both Lord and Christ, ver. 32—36. Thus the first Christians, who had that joy which was sent before Jesus in his sufferings abiding in them, came to have fellowship with him in his fulness of joy in the presence of his Father, according to the next passage quoted in the Proposition, *John* xv. 9, 10, 11. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you : continue ye in my love : If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love : even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things*

things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. They had this joy in them by BELIEVING: all that Jesus spoke to them served to cherish their faith, that the joy might remain in them: when he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do, and was afterwards taken into his presence, then was his promise to them fulfilled; and their joy became full by EXPERIENCE.

But after all, the commentator seems willing to acknowledge, That being enriched with heavenly blessings, depends on diligence and circumspection in walking with God*. And he cites *Isa.* xl. 31. which contains a promise of strength and perseverance to surmount opposition in the Christian race†. This promise imports no less than an increase of hope and confidence of obtaining mercy from God, and enjoying glory with Jesus, at the end of the race, according to what Jesus said unto his disciples; *He that endureth unto the end, shall be saved.* But I am far from thinking that the comment's *diligence and circumspection*, and the proposition's *love and obedience*, are in reality the same.

It is said, "Where Christ is truly formed in the soul, so as it is grounded in the truth, as it is in Jesus; that soul is so firmly built upon Christ the rock, that he cannot grow any higher in regard to the firmness and stability of his hope, and confidence in God." Tho' it will not be easy to shew the truth of what is here said, take the words in what sense we will; yet we must keep in mind, that the thing in question is not

* Pape. 32.

† See 2 Cor. i. 3—11. Eph. iii. 16. Col. i. 10, 11.
the

the believer's confidence in the power of God, and the truth of his word; and his growth herein; but that which the believer is said to grow in, in the proposition, and which is denied in the comment, is, hope and confidence that HE has an interest in the divine grace, and shall be saved thereby. To support the assertion, That where Christ is truly formed in the soul, it has then all the growth, in the above respect, it can ever have; we are (very impertinently) referred to *Psal.* xxiii. 4. xlv. 2. *Isa.* xxvi. 3, 4. xxviii. 16. One might have expected to have found the 23. Psalm applied in a different manner. Let the 46. Psalm be compared with *Rev.* xx. 9. Tho' *Isa.* xxvi. 3. may point at the certain salvation of all who know the Name of the Lord, and so put their trust in him; and the following verse be an encouragement from hence, and from the consideration of the Lord's everlasting strength, to trust always in him; yet the principal thing to be noted here, is, The time *when* this song shall be sung: and according to the interpretation of this passage in the New Testament, it must be when the dead are raised up incorruptible. Compare the 8 verse of the former chapter with *1 Cor.* xv. 54. THEN, *shall this song be sung, &c.* In *Isa.* xxviii. 16. we have these words, *He that believeth shall not make haste;* which Paul gives the sense of thus; *shall not be ashamed,* *Rom.* ix. 33. and Peter thus; *Shall not be confounded,* *2 Pet.* ii. 6. See *Dan.* xii. 2. *Mat.* xxv. 46. The sense of these words is, what is so fully declared in the New Testament, *He that believeth shall be saved,*—when the unbelievers are overtaken with shame and everlasting contempt.

It is farther observed, that, "Paul's confidence in his
 " God was as firm as was possible for it to be—." But
 when was his confidence thus firm?—When he first be-
 came a child of God, and a brother of the disciples,
 which was the time when Christ was formed in him,
Act. ix. 8—22? Nay; but we are referred to the very
 time when he had *finished his christian course*, and when
the time of his departure to heaven was at hand. Yet
 notwithstanding Paul's confidence of his own future
 blessedness was as high as was possible for it to be, he
 was not grown to his full stature!—But perhaps when
 we think of Paul as not arrived at his full stature, the
 commentator does not mean to direct us to the very
 time he wrote his second epistle to Timothy; tho' he
 has two references to this epistle to shew us, that his
 confidence could rise no higher when he was yet to grow
 in stature. The texts referred to, to shew that Paul
 did not esteem himself arrived at his full stature are
Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. But the thing Paul had in view
 here, and the attainment he was aiming at, was *The*
resurrection of the dead, when he should apprehend that
for which he also was apprehended of Christ Jesus:—it was
 this perfection to come, he was pressing towards, when he
 should know even as also he was known, *1 Cor. xiii. 12*.
 The prize here is the same with the crown *2 Tim. iv. 8*.
 This crown set before christians in their race here, they
 shall receive at the appearance of Christ; when all rule,
 and all authority, and power, shall be put down, and the
 saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and
 possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever*.

L

The

* *Dan. vii. 18, 22, 27. 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. 2 Tim. iv.*
7, 8. Heb. xii. 1, 2, 28. 1 Pet. i. 7. v. 4. Act. xx. 24.

The commentator would have us to distinguish between *formation* and *growth*, according to the word of truth ; but if we distinguish between these, according to the word of truth, then it must not be according to his word who would lead us to esteem Paul either a newly *formed* Christian, or not arrived at his full stature, when he said, I have finished my course ; nor yet according to his word who would teach us, that, the person who has Christ truly formed in him, cannot grow at all in hope and confidence of standing in the true grace of God. Does not the word of truth teach us that faith, hope, and charity constitute a Christian, and that he grows in all these ? *Luk. xvii. 5. 2 Cor. x. 15. 2 Thes. i. 3. 1 Thes. iii. 12. Rom. xv. 13. Heb. vi. 11.* To this end was the institution of the Gospel-Church-Order and all things whatsoever the apostles taught the disciples to observe : And in the observation of those things, they grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : In the observation of these things they attain to a settled assurance that they love the truth—that their joy springs from it, and is not the joy of the hypocrite—that they have eternal life begun in them. So Jesus thus addressed those Jews who believed on him ; *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, John viii. 31, 32.* And the apostle James says, respecting Abraham, *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ? Jam. ii. 22.*

P R O P. 10.

According to the comment, "The scripture quoted,"
at

at the end of this proposition, “does not prove the “ thing asserted*.” The thing asserted is, that a person whose conscience does not condemn him, as being disaffected to the Gospel, notwithstanding his natural inclination to establish his own righteousness, has confidence towards God—confidence of his standing in the truth. The texts brought to prove this are 1 John iii. 19, 20, 21. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. According to the apostle here, our love to the truth must appear by the truth of our work, in opposition to the word and the tongue. Our heart is here supposed a judge of the true spring of our work, and either yields us confidence before God, or condemns us in his sight. If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart in knowing and judging—He fully knows our hypocrisy: So the condemnation from Him must be greater than that from our heart. If our hearts condemn us not, in our profession, for disaffection to the revealed righteousness by which only we can approach unto him, then have we confidence before him: And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

But it is reckoned, “ Confidence is not afforded from “ the heart; but to the heart.” The apostle says, we shall assure OUR HEARTS; and, if OUR HEART condemn us. So the parties first concerned in this matter

are WE and OUR HEARTS. And if *confidence* cannot be afforded from the heart, neither can *condemnation* come from the heart. The commentator's referring to ver. 24. and Chap. iv. 13. is not any thing to the purpose. The Spirit of God giving confidence to his people no way contradicts their having confidence from their hearts, but supposes it. But the Proposition does not relate to the testimony of the Spirit mentioned in those two texts, which is distinct from, and higher than that spoken of in the passage cited for the proof of the Proposition.

We may now observe how he confounds *faith* and *experience*; or the work of the Spirit as he is called the *Spirit of faith*, and the *Spirit of adoption*. He says, "The love of God in Christ Jesus, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. *Rom. v. 5.* This, and this alone, is the undeniable testimony of our union with Christ: even the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son, by his Spirit, according to his word, in our hearts. *1 John v. 9.*" The witness of God concerning his Son, in his voice from heaven at his baptism, in raising him from the dead, and in giving him glory, is declared in the Scripture to be believed by men, *1 John v. 7—10.* whoever among men receive the testimony, set to their seal that God is true, and so have eternal life begun in them, ver. 11, 12. But on their crediting the testimony of God concerning his Son, they do not immediately know for certain that they themselves are true believers having the beginning of eternal life, ver. 13. And so the Holy Ghost's shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, from the Soul of Jesus in heaven, like as he shed it abroad from the Father

Father on the Son when he sat down on his throne*, and from him on the believers in his name on earth, who were waiting for it, is distinct from his fixing the testimony of God concerning his Son in the consciences of men when they first believe. The Scripture never confounds these things. In 1 *John* v. 1—10. The apostle John is speaking of being BORN, by believing the record that God hath given of his Son: In *Rom.* v. 5. the apostle Paul is speaking of ANOINTING, or shedding abroad the love of God AFTER being *born* of God. And the way to this enjoyment is described thus: *Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

The commentator, speaking of persons being manifestly blessed with the love of God, and the effect hereof being love to God, and the children of God; which again produces the labor of love to his children, adds, “And if this chain of causes and effects do genuinely follow one another; so that the heart finds no ground of condemnation; *Hereby we know that we are of the truth*: Not only radically, but practically walking therein:” Now, if we must know that we are *radically* of the truth by the genuine procession of these causes and effects, how then will our knowledge be complete, till the last *effect* appear? And how can this appear till we have been engaged in the labor of love to God’s name by ministering to the saints? Or will our Com-

* *Psal.* xlv. 7. *Heb.* i. 9. *Act.* ii. 33. *Tit.* iii. 6.

mentator help us to distinguish between the *work* of ministering to the saints, and our being *ready* to engage in this work when ever we shall see occasion? Again, how shall we grow wiser by being told, If we practically walk in the truth, we shall hereby know that we practically walk in truth? For I reckon we must say that our serving the children of God, is practically walking in the truth. He adds further, "The plain design of
 " the text is an admonition to a diligent walking in the
 " commandments of God; that our hearts may be
 " assured (or made bold) in confidence towards God
 " (or composed, without blushing in his presence) that
 " with chearful countenance, we may come to the throne
 " of grace, to ask, in hopes to receive whatsoever we
 " want." The *plain design* of the apostle John in the text cited in the Proposition and the context, is to inform his little children, that in loving one another in DEED and in TRUTH they shall be assured by their own spirit and by the Spirit of God, that they are OF THE TRUTH, the children of God, and have Christ abiding in them. And his design is also to inform them that he and the rest of the apostles knew these things in the same way, ver. 14, 24.

A person must be estranged from that *boldness* formed in the heart of a sinner, by the blood of the Lamb, to draw near unto God, who can ground such boldness on his own diligence in keeping the commandments. It may be here boldly said, that our commentator's "composedure" springs from a root that brings forth fruit unto death*. I need only transcribe the rest of the

* *Rom. vii. 5.*

period to confirm this: "For as much as we can then
" appeal to God, that the grace he had bestowed on us,
" was not in vain: but has been improved to the true
" end." So we must take the apostle John to be teaching
us, that our *improving grace* gives us boldness in the
presence of God! What would John have said of a
person fathering such doctrine as this on him? See 1
John iv. 3. 2 *John* vii †. We are here referred to 2 *Cor.*
vi. 1. Where the apostles are neither saying, that grace
is ever *bestowed in vain*; or that the improvement of
grace prevents confusion of face before God; but are
considering themselves as ambassadors for Christ, and
workers together with God, beseeching the Corinthians
not to *receive* the grace of God in vain; the same with
not *believing* in vain, 1 *Cor.* xv. 2. and it amounts to
an admonition to beware lest any of them should be
deceiving their own souls about the grace of God. We
are also referred to *Psal.* cxix. 6. which is indeed the
language of one promising himself *boldness* and *composure*
before God on account of his own obedience to the
divine Law: and it is also the language of one standing
in the place of sinners, and charged with their sins,
ver. 53, 136.

" A pure conscience, he says, and holy conversation,
" are evidences to the believer, that the grace of God
" hath its proper influence in his heart; or that he
" practically stands in the truth of God's council."

† They equally come under the censure of John in
these texts, who deny the ancient comfort of love in
keeping Christ's new commandment; and who make
use of their obedience, and their improvement of grace
to keep them from blushing in the presence of God.

Here

Here again one might ask, what benefit are we to receive from being told, a holy conversation, is the evidence of a holy conversation? Or is there some difference between a holy conversation and *practically* standing in the truth of God's council? The comment, to illustrate this, refers to *Jer.* xxiii. 18. 22. where we find those prophets who told lies in the name of the Lord reproved*; and the power of the truth to turn men from ungodliness asserted: but we neither learn from hence, that these prophets had the grace of God in their hearts, tho' without its proper influence; nor that the grace of God ever is in any heart which it does not properly influence. A pure conscience is, according to the scripture, a conscience furnished with an answer to such questions as these, *How should man be just with God?—Where with shall I come before the Lord?* The believer receives a complete answer to those questions from the Gospel, and so has a pure conscience, which must be an "evidence" to him that there is forgiveness with God for the chief of sinners, and yet their inventions visited with vengeance; according to his NAME declared in the Gospel. *Isa.* xlv. 21. *John* xvii. 26.—No sinful man can please God, or have a holy conversation, that has not such a conscience.

But it seems, it is not possible that a pure conscience and holy conversation, should be evidences to the believer of his standing in vital union with Christ. If

* Some take *Jer.* xxiii. 18. to be the language of the false prophets, ridiculing Jeremiah, or any other, who threatned the nation with feeling the divine displeasure.

we ask, why so? we shall be told, "Because no man
" can know that his conscience is pure, or his conver-
" sation holy---unless he is first certain, that the love
" of God in his soul is the vital spring thereof."—This
is saying, that every one who knows he has a pure
conscience and a holy conversation, knows also that he
stands in vital union with Christ.—Paul seems to say,
that *a pure conscience* is the spring of a holy conversation,
even as faith is the spring of it: *The end of the command-
ment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good consci-
ence, and of faith unfeigned,* 1 Tim. i. 5.—*Purge your
conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* Heb. ix.
14.—No sinner can begin to love God till he has a
pure conscience.

But let us suppose, that by a *pure conscience* the com-
mentator intends such a conscience as does not condemn
us for loving those who are of the truth only in *word*
and *tongue*, and not in *deed* and *truth*; but on the con-
trary, such a conscience as bears witness to us that we
love the Gospel in the same view which moves men
naturally to hate it; even as striking at the root of our
pride, and cutting off every evasion from concluding
ourselves wicked wretches and enemies in our hearts to
God—standing exposed to his wrath; so plucking us
as brands out of the fire:—Such a conscience as bears
us witness that we love all who receive the Gospel, in
this view, in *deed* and *truth*: Then we must say, in op-
position to our commentator, that such a conscience is
an evidence of our being alive with Christ. Now I
suppose it would stand for nothing with him to be put
in mind that the apostles, the authentic standards of ex-
perience to all who believe thro' their word, had an
evidence

118 *Mr. Johnson's Com. considerd. Prop. 11.*

evidence of their union with Christ hereby: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. 1 John iii. 14.*

We are next informed how it is, that "a child of light knows his relation to Christ:" and this is "by the truth dwelling in him.*" Here we are referred to *John 14. 20.* which has already been considered; and all that is necessary further to observe here, is, that Jesus in the text promised them this *knowledge*, as a future blessing, which they might expect to receive; but they had before this the truth dwelling in them, even from the time they believed Jesus to be the Christ the Son of God. The knowledge of Christ, by the Spirit, in both these respects, (*viz.* both in respect of *faith* and *experience*) is mentioned *ver. 17.* *But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

P R O P. 11.

Tho' conscience be not infallible, yet it must not be reckoned "a weak and vain thing to admit its evidence —to the integrity of a man's heart, in his words and actions", altho it be in matters of a divine and eternal nature." But when the apostles rejoiced in the testimony of their consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—by the grace of God they had their conversation in the world, were the rejoicing in nothing of a divine and eternal nature?—It is neither a weak nor a vain thing, to admit the testimony of conscience

* Page. 34.

that OUR CONVERSATION IN THE WORLD IS BY THE GRACE OF GOD. And the Proposition does not say, that when the testimony of conscience is joined with the testimony of the Holy Ghost, there is then any possibility of its being erroneous.—It plainly says, that the testimony of the Spirit takes off all suspicion of error from the testimony of conscience. But if persons reckon their conscience justifies them as to their faith and love; and yet do not experience their *consolation abound* in the profession of the grace of God displayed in the death of Jesus, they have indeed reason sufficient to suspect their conscience of being under a false bias; for the promise of Christ, and the corresponding experience of the apostles must still hold true. *John* xiv. 23. *Luk.* xi. 9, 13. *2 Cor.* i. 5.

Neither is it an insult to the Spirit of truth, to say, he bears witness to the same thing that our conscience bears witness to; unless we shall also reckon it an insult to have human persons joint witnesses with him, in the concerns of the Gospel, as we see them joined with him and distinguished from him, *Act.* v. 32. If it be said these witnesses were infallible; it will be said again, they were so, because joined by the Holy Ghost, and by him infallibly guided in their testimony: So they could not begin their testimony till he came to join them. But to come lower, both in respect to time and importance. The commentator will not hesitate a moment about himself being a witness for the truth of the Gospel: and I presume he will neither incline to say that his testimony is infallible, nor that he stands unsupported by the Holy Ghost, so far as he testifies the truth;

truth ; nor yet that his pretension to assume the character of a witness for the Gospel puts any insult on the Holy Ghost, the infallible witness.

The commentator can make no sense of the proposition's first saying "The assurance of hope is completed only by the testimony of the comforter," and then again, "Christians, enjoying the assurance of hope, have two witnesses, *conscience*, and the Holy Spirit." This *witness bearing* of conscience is what he can form no conception of ; and this may be the reason why he is ready to assure us, that the Scripture does not any where inform us of conscience bearing witness to any such thing as our being of the truth, or *the children of God*. But tho' to him it appears like talking nonsense to say, that our conscience bears witness to the work of faith and labor of love in us, thereby giving us confidence in the sight of God, who knows the spring of all our words and actions, that we believe on the name of his Son, and love one another as he gave us commandment ; the Holy Ghost confirming the testimony of our conscience and completing our assurance, by joining his own testimony in shedding abroad in our hearts an abundant sense of that love manifest in the atonement ; the doctrine it self, so clearly laid down in the New Testament, will be no less *sensible* and *acceptable* to those who understand it.

That *Rom. viii. 16.* may appear to contain no such doctrine, as one would be ready to conclude, on the first view of the text, the commentator offers us his assistance in reading it : and he would learn us to fix the same sense to the preposition, *with*, that *to* or *in* requires ;

quires ; and so we shall find but *one* witness bearing his testimony *to* or *in* our spirit. But (1) *with*, *to*, and *in*, are surely not synonymous in this case ? And if they be not, then, (2) He should have shewn us some reason for his *loose* way of reading the text. If there be no good reason for altering the translation, by the substitution of another preposition, instead of *with*, then we shall be obliged to understand something more than we can do by *to*, or *in* ; and no less than *two* witnesses, the *Spirit it self*, and *our spirit*. (3) He should also have shewn us that his reading is as agreeable to 1 *John* iii. 14, 19, 20, 21, 24. 2 *Cor.* i. 12, 22*.

But it seems, “ to say, The Spirit of Christ, and our “ spirit, are joint witnesses, would not prove common “ sense.” Why not ? Because if the spirit of a man, it self, be a witness, there is then nothing remaining to whom the witness can be given. Was Paul then below *common sense* when he said, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie*

* Some great oeconomists in religion, who are not over well pleased to be esteemed enthusiasts, reckon the witness of the Spirit in *Rom.* viii. 16. is no more than his giving the character of one of their genuine gracious souls in the Scripture ; and that character drawn in the Scripture by the Spirit, and presented to the gracious soul, is his *witnessing with our Spirit*. Thus they honour the Scripture, and clear themselves of enthusiasm ! And thus too they have a spacious field before them where their pride may sport it self at large ; for however plainly the character of a gracious soul be laid down in the Scripture, yet the gracious soul can see little evidence in what is said in the Scripture till the godly minister by means of his casuistical skill, help to dispel fear and darkness, and clear up difficulties.

122 *Mr. Johnson's Com. considered. Prop. 12.*

not, MY CONSCIENCE also bearing ME witness, &c. for if his conscience was a witness, what was there left of him, to receive the witness? Was John also talking nonsense when he said, *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, &c.* For if their own conscience convicted them what was there in them to receive the conviction? By this same rule, which must direct us in judging of common sense, we shall find the apostles in *2 Cor. i 12. 1 John iii. 20. 21.* very deficient in point of common sense. And we shall also find the commentator himself, in this same Proposition, putting nonsense on us, for truth; for he says, “It is true, conscience bears witness to the integrity of a man’s heart, in his words and actions.”—For the sake of common sense, “to whom does it bear witness?”

Tho’ the author of the Proposition asserts, two distinct witnesses, in giving Christians the assurance of their being the children of God, yet he does not confound their testimony: he does not raise the testimony of conscience higher than its bearing witness to the truth of a man’s love and obedience to the Gospel, in the sight of God.

John xvi. 13, 14. was cited in the Proposition to shew that when the Holy Spirit comforts the *obedient*, he does not lead them to speak in a high strain about *his work* in their hearts, but to rejoice in the *work of Christ* with joy unspeakable and full of glory, for the riches of mercy and grace which appears therein.

P R O P. 12.

Tho’ the testimony of the Spirit, as the comforter, has already been frequently hinted at, yet it may be
necessary

necessary to consult the Scripture more particularly on this subject, in answer to the question, "In what sense, " or to whom, is he supposed to bear witness *?"

Jesus Christ believed the truth, that he was the beloved Son of God in whom he was well pleased, by the Holy Ghost opening his ears (*Psal.* xl. 6.) to hear the divine testimony in revelation; and so he had the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of faith, in the same way that all the believers of the same truth have. And from his childhood he grew in the knowledge and faith of the Old Testament, as we see *Luk.* ii. 40, 52. When he came to be baptized of John undertaking to FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS †, he then made a public profession of the truth he believed ‡, and was confirmed therein by the testimony of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. *Mat.* iii. 15, 16. *Mar.* i. 9, 10, 11. *Luk.* iii. 21, 22. iv. 1. So he had an earnest of the joy that was set before him. He was afterwards tempted by Satan

* Page. 36.

† This is the righteousness in which God is well pleased, and to which the voice from heaven, *Mat.* iii. 17. referred: and if we understand the meaning of this undertaking and profession of Jesus at his baptism, we may know what to think of many who come to be baptized, professing to follow Jesus in fulfilling righteousness; first telling long stories concerning the workings of their self righteous pride, under the notion of a work of grace in their hearts.

‡ Even as all who were baptized in the apostolic age also did—they confessed the same truth, and so were baptized, *Act.* ii. 41. viii. 12, 37. xvi. 31, 32, 33.

to doubt the truth of what he heard and believed*; and for his professing it, he was persecuted to death by the Jews †. But he still held fast the truth. He did not waver in his faith thro' all the afflictions of his life, nor in the extremity of his suffering in *the power of darkness*. He believed, and therefore spake, when he was greatly afflicted. So Jesus had the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of faith, when sorrowful even unto death, and when he had him not as the Comforter.

But when he had finished the work which was given him to do; then God turned away his anger and comforted him, *Isa. xii. 1*. And this he did in those two respects: (1) He shewed him the path of life, *Psal. xvi. 11. Act. ii. 28*. Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, *Rom. vi. 4*. and by the working of the mighty power of the Spirit of holiness, *Rom. i. 4. Eph. i. 19, 20*. and so had the enjoyment of the Father's approbation and acceptance of his work, and a higher assurance of the truth than when he believed it, and spake it, in the days of his flesh. (2) He made him full of joy with his countenance. Jesus, being raised from the dead, entered into his glory; that glory which the prophets testified should follow his sufferings, and so he fully received the Holy Ghost as the Comforter; giving him fulness of joy in the presence of the Father, according to the promises: *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Psal. xlv. 7. Heb. i. 9. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed. Isa. xliiii. 3*. Then

* *Mat. iv. 3, 6, 9. Luk. iv. 3, 6, 7, 9.*

† *Mat. xxvi. 63, 64, 66.*

commenced the kingdom of heaven, prefigured before by David's kingdom ; as Peter declared when he opened to the Jews the mystery of that kingdom.————

Therefore being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. Act. ii. 30.* Jesus being shewn the path of life, and having fulness of joy in the presence of the Father, received the highest assurance of the truth he once *believed* and *spoke*, being greatly afflicted.—He who was once in agonies under the frown of the Most High, and the sense of his wrath against sin, was made most blessed and happy in glory, under the sense of his love, in the light of his countenance, rewarding that righteousness thro' which grace reigned to eternal life.

Thus he was glorified, anointed with the oil of joy, and received the Holy Ghost as the Comforter.

And then were the spirits of just men in heaven perfected, by partaking with him in his anointing, and beholding with fulness of joy what they believed on earth and were waiting for in heaven, *Heb. xi. 39, 40. xii. 23.*

When Jesus was thus *anointed* and *comforted* in heaven, being seated at the Father's Right Hand, and made full of joy with his countenance, it was presently signified on *earth* ; for then the believers of the same truth

* It was now that the great things prophesied of in the following texts, and many others, received their accomplishment *Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xxxiii. 7. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16. 1 Chron. xvii. 11—14. Psal. ii. 6. xxiv. 7, 9. lxxxix. 27, 29, 36. lxvi. 16. cx. 1, 2, 3. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. xxxiii. 15, 16.*

which he believed on earth, partook also with him in his anointing, receiving the Holy Ghost as the comforter, according as Peter says, *Act. ii. 33. Therefore being by the Right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.* And this was according to his promises to his disciples before he left them and went to the Father. *John xiv. 15, 16, 17, 18, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7, 13, 14. vii. 38, 39. Act. i. 4, 5. Luk. xxiv. 49.*

The Holy Ghost who filled the soul of Jesus with the highest sense of the Father's love when he rested from his work, and whereby he gloried with unspeakable joy in the *experience* of what he believed when he said, *I am the Son of God*, pours forth from Jesus a portion of that same love and joy, into the hearts of those on earth who believe on his Name and love one another; and so he is the *Spirit of his Son*, and the *Spirit of adoption*, sent forth into the hearts of the Sons of God, (*Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 15.*) or those who believe, as Jesus did, that he is the Son of God, who was delivered for the offences of sinners and raised again for their justification. For this is *the Spirit it self* that bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, *Rom. viii. 16.* Their spirit bears witness by yielding them confidence in the sight of the heart searching God, that they believe and love the *truth* which Jesus believed: The Spirit it self, (*viz of adoption*) which filled Jesus with joy, joins his testimony, or bears witness with their spirit, by shedding abroad in their hearts, the love of God, first shed forth on Jesus without measure. And this Spirit of adoption gives them the *experience* of what they *believe*,
the

the experience that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, for hereby they partake with Jesus in an abundant sense of the love of God—it is *shed abroad in their hearts*—*shed on them abundantly*; even that love set forth in these words; *This is my beloved Son.* And so they are sealed with that holy Spirit of promise and have the earnest of that future blessedness which they shall inherit for ever, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory: accordingly the apostles give this account of their own enjoyment of this blessing: *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*—*Now he who hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. v. 5. and to the Ephesians Paul says,---*That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted (after hearing the Gospel)---In whom also (after believing) Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his Glory.* Agreeable to this, we see this anointing Spirit called the *Spirit of glory.* 1 Pet. iv. 14. and those who were first anointed, were thereby made partakers of the glory that shall be revealed 1 Pet. v. 1.

This love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is what the apostle John calls *love perfected in us.* He says, *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment*

ment : because as he is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

So all who believe on the Son of God, and are not made perfect in love, (viz. by enjoyment) are not wholly freed from that fear of falling short of eternal blessedness, which is mixed with pain or torment—are not wholly freed from the fear lest, after all their profession, they at last be found such hypocrites as shall be surprised with fearfulness that shall last for ever and ever. And the more desirable the object they have in view is, the more anxiously concerned they must be, till love is perfected in them, when this fear is *cast out* by an earnest of that which they were afraid of losing. But we must still remember, that however the apostle speaks of love being perfected in us, and of our being in this world—as Jesus is in his glory*, yet we can receive no proper perfection of either *love* or *glory* in *this world*; for in our highest enjoyment of God, it must still be said of us, *We walk by faith, not by sight :—We are absent from the Lord.* Our highest enjoyment of the love and glory of Christ in this mortal state, in comparison of what we shall receive when his glory shall be revealed, is but as the dawning in the morning to the light at noon day:

* 1 John iv. 17. — *as he is, so are we in this world.* It does not appear that those words should be read as some would have them; *as he WAS*, &c. for tho' this would be true, yet it no way agrees with the scope of the apostle. Neither can we confine the plural pronoun, *we*, so to the apostles, as if the same might not be said of other Christians; for this would be against the scope of the New Testament.

Tho' ye, t the desire of *knowing* Christ is so strong in them who have the first fruits of the Spirit as to determine their choice of being present with him, tho' at the expence of their earthly tabernacle being dissolved. *Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 1—8. Rom. viii. 23.*

It should also be noted that the Scripture never supposes any person possessing this *comfort*, without bearing the *cross*—The apostles seem to proportion the one to the other both in themselves and those that hear them. *2 Cor. i. 5, 7.* And we see their enjoyments in bearing the afflictions of the Gospel, *2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18.* and how Peter connects in us the *suffering* and *glory* of Christ. *1 Pet. iv. 13, 14.*

“ But in the foregoing Proposition, and in this, the truth is inverted. For, the former ascribes the evidence of divine things to the conscience; the latter ascribes the evidence of men's works to the Spirit.”

The former Proposition supposes conscience to be a witness in us to the same thing that the Spirit is also a witness to: It supposes conscience to bear witness to the truth of our *faith* and *love*; and it supposes the Spirit to bear witness to the same: It supposes conscience to bear witness as being acquainted with the springs of our profession; and it supposes the Spirit to be much more acquainted therewith, and to give his testimony by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart. Even so this Proposition supposes the very same things.

By “the evidence of divine things” the commentator may be supposed to intend the evidence of our being the children of God; and by “the evidence of
“ men's

“men’s works” the evidence of our works being the fruits of faith. The evidence of both these is the same. And one would think those who have read the propositions, need not be told, that they represent believers as having this evidence complete by the testimony of two witnesses, their own spirit, and the Spirit of God. So his saying the truth is inverted in the two propositions, is a mere trifling amusement. He observes, that,

“The scriptures annexed to the Proposition, do not contain any thing like a gloss, in favour of what seems to be intended in the words; or bear any relation to it: except *Heb. vi. 10, 11. 2 Pet. i. 5--10.*” The rest of the scriptures are *Rom. viii. 17. Eph. i. 13. iv. 30.* Now that which seems to be intended in the words of the Proposition is, (1) that the assurance of hope is not attained to, but in the way of obedience and self-denial: and *Rom. viii. 17.* seems to say as much as that we have not the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, what ever we pretend to, unless we are taking up our cross and suffering with Christ. In the passage cited from *Heb. chap. vi.* The apostles mention their persuasion that the Hebrews maintained the *work and labor of love*, which are the *things that accompany salvation*, and *better things* than the most flaming speeches about *illuminations*, and *tastings of the good word of God*: For the apostle compares these *works* to *herbs*, (so makes them the genuine fruits of christianity) and points out the connexion between them and—*blessing from God*; while he supposes that great things might be spoken of, in the way of being enlightned, tasting the heavenly gift, and partaking
of

of the Holy Ghost, &c. without the things that accompany salvation; and such persons as have these *tastings*, *enlightnings*, and *participations*, without the work and labor of love, are compared to the ground often watered, but still *bearing briers and thorns*. On this every one of the Hebrews are desired to be diligent in the labor of love in order to their enjoying (and continuing to the end to enjoy) *the full assurance of hope*. Agreeable to what Paul here says of receiving blessing from God, James says, *Whofo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be BLESSED IN HIS DEED*.

In 2 Pet. i. 5—10. the apostle exhorted those who had obtained like precious faith with himself, to add thereto, in their order, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; and he exhorted to diligence in these things to the end they might be *assured* of their *calling and election*: and he told them, if they did these things they should *never fall short* of the everlasting kingdom of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2) What seems to be further intended by the Proposition, is, that the assurance of hope has not an abiding in believers further than they are abiding in Christ's commandments—loving one another as he gave them commandment: And in Eph. iv. 30. Paul says, *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*. The apostle adds: *Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from among you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*
There

There can, I think, be no occasion for any remarks here.

Tho' the source of that love and joy which affords believers the assurance of hope is not their *works* no more than their *sins*; but that love and joy with which Jesus is filled in heaven: (*for as he is, so are we in this world.*) Yet that shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, or love being perfected in us, which maketh not ashamed and casteth out fear, has a *dependence* on obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ, or a *conformity* to his righteousness; and is enjoyed in proportion thereto, according to the promise of Christ to his disciples, the accomplishment of that promise, the experience of the apostles, and the many exhortations to believers, as has been observed.

But it is observed, that "If the words of Jesus took full place in the Thief, *Luk. xxiii. 43.* he undeniably "enjoyed full assurance of hope; tho' little obedience "had appeared." Has our commentator then heard some private whisper, that he shall go to heaven when he leaves this world, which he has taken for the voice of Christ? for sure such words are not to be found in the Scripture, otherwise we might all read them as well as himself; even as we can all read that Jesus assured the Thief of happiness after death. Tho' the Thief who suffered with Jesus could not experience the Spirit of adoption, yet his assurance of hope must commence with his assurance of faith: But must the same be said of those who have nothing said to them in distinction from other sinners of mankind?—Must the same be said of those who are not described in the scripture by
either

either name and fir-name, place of abode, or any other distinguishing mark? or can any man hear Jesus saying to him as he did to the Thief; *This day shalt THOU be with me, &c.*? And if not, to what purpose is the case of the Thief instanced? But suppose a Thief should be condemned to suffer death for his theft, and should afterwards come to believe on him who was numbered with transgressors, (as he would stand as fair for it as a just person) and before his execution should have his joy made full, how is this inconsistent with the doctrine of the Proposition?

The commentator would seem at a loss, what to say concerning *self-denied obedience*, and *encreasing in hope*, with the connection which the Proposition puts between these. He sometimes seems willing by the help of a bold assertion, to put us quite out of countenance with the thought of any such connection: and again, he sees some necessity to compose himself, and lower his stile a little. It must, I think, be on some such account as this, that he first concludes from *Jer. xiv. 8. xvii. 7, 13. Joel. iii. 16. Col. i. 27. 1 Tim. i. 1.* that "It is impossible for any believer, who knows what hope is, to be persuaded that it can have any dependence on his works of obedience;" and then again observes, that "Those things that are truly called works,--- may---be conducive to the same end;*" viz. to establish the mind so in the knowledge of the Son of God, as faith may grow up into hope. And here we are left to conclude that *faith* may commence before *hope*; or, that it may be necessary for a person's faith

to rise some degrees before it can be denominated hope: for he says, "Hope in the heart, is a certain degree, or measure of faith. And this measure, may not be attained with the first commencement of faith; but by degrees, &c." In the texts above cited from the Prophets, we see the Lord called the hope of Israel, his people; and he is so called because his people have no hope or confidence, but in him alone—they have none in themselves. To the same purpose is *1 Tim. i. 1.* But this is very far from shewing us, that his people do not grow in the hope and confidence of his mercy and salvation, in keeping his commandments. *Col. i. 27.* has respect to what Christ promised his disciples in keeping his commandments, *John xiv. 20.* as well as to the immediate effect of faith in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus viz. *a good hope thro' grace.*

When we are told, that the Christian's works may be conducive, in a remote sense, to his establishment in the knowledge of the Son of God by which *hope* takes place in his heart; we have the *remote sense* thus described: "The more clear the conscience is kept from guilt, either of commission or omission; the more the mind is disentangled from the world, fleshly lusts, or spiritual wickedness; the more delight a person takes in the will of his heavenly Father; and the more free, composed, and serene, will the soul be in searching the Scripture, &c." It would seem from this, that a professor of christianity, committing sin and omitting duty, has nothing to fear but the loss of a little composure and serenity of mind, in searching the Scriptures, &c. by which his attainment to an establishment in knowledge

knowledge is some what retarded. And so the Christian must stand on a level with the philosopher?—His works must afford him a *clear* conscience? Do then the commentator and his christians attain to an establishment, in the knowledge of the Son of God, by means of keeping their conscience clear from guilt, to search the Scripture, thro' their labor of love performed in the Spirit of Christ?—Can any who are hearkening to the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, hear, without indignation, a christian philosopher, talking about the labor of love, keeping the conscience clear from guilt, and yielding a composed and serene mind to search the Scripture? Or do they any where hint at acceptable working, or serving the living God, otherwise than as having the conscience purged from guilt, and made composed and serene by the blood of Christ?

But I am ready to agree with him, that works of self-denial, labors of love, crucifying the world, &c. are fruits of faith, whereby it appears to be genuine, not only to others, but to ourselves also.

P R O P. 13.

Concerning the fear and hope of this proposition the commentator says, “In what soul soever the one dwells, the other has no residence. The naming these two opposites together, forms an image perfectly absurd.”—Observing the Proposition to say, the assurance of hope does not set any Christian above the fear of disobedience and its consequences from the divine justice, and “guessing” the consequences from the divine justice

to be "eternal wrath," he says, "If this be the meaning, it is false. A child of light—has no such fear: nor do any of the scriptures quoted in proof of this fear express any such thing." Again, speaking of this fear and hope dwelling together in the same person, he says, "Fire and water, life and death, cannot be more opposite." As he has rested these strong expressions, with some others, on his own single authority, they can scarcely be thought to deserve any further notice.

It is more necessary to observe what he advances from the Scripture against the doctrine of the Proposition.—The lambs of Christ, he says, "know their dwelling to be in him." Here he refers to *John* xiv. 20. *At that day ye shall know, that—you are in me.* Must we then conclude, that these disciples were not the lambs of Christ when he made them this promise? For they had not the knowledge of their being in Christ, which is here promised, till the *day* mentioned. But if our commentator will admit us to call them the *lambs of Christ* from the time they became *followers of Christ*, for what end, may we think, has he referred to this text?

I apprehend, however carefully we look thro' the four evangelists, we shall not find any of the disciples of Christ placed above the *fear* imported in this question: *Lord is it I?* unless by some such influence as governed their speech *Mat.* xxvi. 33, 35.

It is further observed, that "The lambs of Christ believe his word infallible; that they shall not come into condemnation." Whoever really believes the word of Christ, must believe it to be infallible; but where does his word inform any particular person that

he

he shall not come into condemnation? The passage referred to is *John. v. 24. Verily verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* We see from this text that whoever believe on the Father, and hear the Son, shall not come into condemnation. And when we read this text, we may think what sort of believers they are, who, along with their belief of the Gospel, believe also that the believers of the Gospel may perish eternally. But let our precious commentator say, does this text inform us, that every true believer is instantly saved from the fear lest his faith prove only the same that hypocrites have? Does Christ in this text assure every believer, that *he* is a believer? Or what kind of relation has it to the assertion it is brought to support? The text asserts, that no believer shall be condemned; but says not to any person in the world, that he, in particular, is a believer.

Further, it seems we must look on all believers, as believing, "That none is able to pluck them out of his (Christ) Father's hands." The text referred to is *John x. 28, 29. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* This text asserts the eternal security of all Christ's sheep, as being in his, and his Father's, hands. But how must we manage to make it say, "all Christ's sheep are assured that they are his sheep?" If it say not this, it says not ought in favour of the cause it is brought to support.

That every real believer of the Gospel shall be saved is one thing ; but that every believer of the Gospel is assured of *his* being a real believer is another thing. The former is, in the Scripture, frequently, clearly, and expressly asserted ; the latter is not so much as once implied.

It seems, to say, that Christians are preserved from falling away, or drawing back to perdition, by the joint influence of fear and hope, is “ a direct contradiction * “ to the word of truth :” and saying so, appears to be contradicting the word of truth where it says (*Phil. i. 6.*) *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* The good work, begun in the Philippians, was their *fellowship* in the Gospel, mentioned in the former verse, the same called the *apostles fellowship*, in *Act. ii. 42.* a work of mercy, and an imitation of

* It is also observed to be “ a direct contradiction “ to the very nature of the thing : for that painful fear “ contains in it the nature of perdition.” Thus we have the absurdity of the Proposition laid open. Now, that we may see into the consistency and decorum of the commentator's scheme, let us set the case, that a person is fleeing from what is dreadful to him, towards a place of safety, and propose the question,--Can this person, on the one hand be impelled by fear, and on the other attracted by hope ? No, this cannot with decorum and consistency be admitted. Why ? Because the fear of being destroyed contains in it the nature of destruction, so can be no motive to flee for safety.—After all I see nothing to hinder us from concluding this the grossest nonsense and absurdity.

the good will of God manifest towards men in the Gospel: and this is the same with the work of faith, and labor of love 1 *Thes.* i. 3. in ministering to the saints, *Heb.* vi. 10. The apostles, reckoning these good works the peculiar or distinguishing fruits of faith, had a singular care over the churches about maintaining them. See 2 *Cor.* viii. 7. Chap. ix. 5—15. *Col.* i. 10. 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18. *Tit.* iii. 1, 8, 14. *Heb.* x. 24. Our commentator's argument from this text must stand some way thus: "In whomsoever God begins the good work of
" faith he will perform it until that day when it shall
" meet its reward; but he therefore does not perform the
" good work by keeping alive in them the *hope* of entering into his eternal joy, and the *fear* of his eternal
" displeasure." But passing this, let us hear the same apostle addressing other churches on the same subject. *Gal.* vi. 4—10. *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

This contradiction is yet further to be seen from 2 *Tim.* i. 12.—*For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed*
unto

unto him against that day. This text expresses Paul's persuasion of the divine power to keep that which he had committed to his keeping : And supposing this was his soul, (See 1 *Pet* iv. 19.) and that his persuasion included perseverance; how are we to conceive from Paul's words, that the Lord in preserving the souls of his saints, (*Psal.* xcvi. 10, 11.) does it not by keeping in their hearts the *hope* of his mercy and the *fear* of his wrath?--So far is Paul from intimating any opposition to what the commentator calls a direct contradiction to the word of truth, that in the next chapter ver. 11—14. he says, *It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: If we deny him he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: He cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance.*

It may not be amiss to note here, the idle use which the commentator and others of his mould frequently find for the Scripture relative names, *us* and *we*, in the business of their *assurance* and *appropriation*; and by which they cherish their *self conceit*, and arm themselves against the fear of God. Were they but half as ready, to stoop, and go along with the apostles in the use they make of the words, *us* and *we*, in such passages as that last cited from Paul it might help to quash their self confident pretensions to the divine favour;--pretensions which have no foundation but pride.

But the doctrine of the Proposition about the influence of fear and hope, also stands in direct contradiction to 1 *Pet.* i. 5.—*Who are kept by the power of God*

through

*through faith unto salvation, &c.** We need but look back to verse 3, and forward to verse 13, 17. and we may see, that the power of God keeps them through *hope* and *fear*, as well as *faith*. So far is the apostle from contradicting this doctrine, directly or indirectly, that he inforces the consideration of the judgment of God, without respect of persons, according to every mans work, as a motive for Christians, to *pass the time of their sojourning here IN FEAR*. See 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

He concludes “painful fear, is the opposite to faith: “and proceeds only from a carnal principle.” But he does not attend to the distinction noted in the Proposition respecting *fear*. The Proposition supposes the fear which hath torment is cast out when love is made perfect; and yet *fear* still to continue to the end of the christian race. And fear of the divine wrath is never thoroughly awakened in any man without faith in the death of Christ.

To shew that this fear “proceeds only from a carnal “principle” we have *Rom. viii. 15.* adduced: *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.* This text shews us the privilege of the New-Testament church beyond the Old. Under the Old Testament, the people had the law, not then satisfied, perpetually bringing sin to remembrance: and the satisfaction to come, which was their relief in *bearing the law* was represented to them only darkly. Moses had a vail on his face: And the people could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. Christ is the

end of the law. So they were like *children* beginning to learn from, and under the discipline of, a *Schoolmaster*. See 2 Cor. iii. 7—18. Gal. iii. 23—25. iv. 1—5. But when the apostles turned *the law* to the Lord Jesus, they took away the *vail* from Moses, and brought *life and immortality to light*. Their Gospel declares the *law* fulfilled in Jesus, an end made of sin, and an everlasting righteousness brought in; so, that *spirit of bondage* is removed, *faith being come*:—*We all with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*. The believers of the Gospel find *boldness* thro' the blood of Jesus who has made the reconciliation, to draw near unto the *TRUE holiest of all* for the forgiveness of their sins; which was not known till the *vail* was taken from Moses, and his law turned to the Lord. The Gospel of Christ is the *spirit* or truth of the *law*, and where the Gospel is believed or understood *there is liberty*. Yet the apostle says, respecting this same revelation, to those about whom he observed evident tokens of salvation, *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*

Now tho' all who believe that Jesus Christ is come, (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) do, not only find rest from their labor, but liberty to draw near to heaven itself; yet no sooner does a person believe the Gospel than he has all his motives of *fear*, naturally subsisting in his conscience, surely established; and every evasion from them cut off: He sees the wrath of God revealed from heaven, in the death of Jesus, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Rom. i. 18. But while he has all his natural motives of *fear* strengthened, even *fear* heightened into *despair*,

despair, he has the most glorious prospect of *hope* opening to him; even *the power of God* standing forth for *salvation*.

When the apostle Paul says, *ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father*, he does not say, that the Romans, who had this Spirit in their hearts, crying Abba Father, and bearing witness with their spirit, that they were the children of God, had it from the instant they commenced believers: For he shews that the Spirit of God's Son gives this assurance after men become the Sons of God by faith, as has been observed on the foregoing articles. But it is not easy to see how the commentator should understand even the "Theory" of the doctrine contained in the text he has quoted.

To shew that the painful fear of the Proposition proceeds, not from the Spirit of Christ, but a carnal principle he refers also to 2 Tim. i. 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* This text is so foreign to his purpose, that I am almost ashamed to make any remark upon it. Is not Paul evidently speaking of being afraid to own the testimony of the Lord, and those who are suffering for that testimony:—afraid to endure the afflictions of the Gospel:—afraid of man? But we must yet observe, that the Spirit of adoption, shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, gives more boldness to profess the Name of Christ, even as he gave the apostles boldness to declare in the presence of the Jewish elders that God raised that Jesus from the dead whom they crucified, and
that

that there was salvation in no other name, than that which they set at nought. The commentator observes, that "It will be impossible for genuine hope to exist" till this fear is expelled by love. And he quotes *Rev.* xxi. 8. This text says, *The fearful—shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.* Is, then, the *fear* which the Proposition calls *painful*, the fear that God cannot, or will not, perform what he has promised? Is it a fear that the opposers of God and his Gospel may prove stronger than he? Is it a fear that the opposition which lies in the christian course is not to be conquered; and so a fear which disheartens to draw back again in the view of tribulation? See *Num.* xiii. 31—33. xiv. 1—4. And if this be not the fear of the Proposition, (which is indeed opposite to faith) what could he propose in citing this text against it? Can he not see a *combat* signified in the preceding verse, with a blessing pronounced on the *victorious*; and this verse pronouncing a curse on the *fearful*, such who are offended with the *cross*, and cannot endure the *warfare*? See *Mat.* v. 29, 30. xiii. 21. And can he not perceive the churches of Asia represented as engaged in this war, with the necessary censures and approbation on their conduct, and the blessing still pronounced on the *victorious*? *Rev.* ii. 7, 9—11, 17, 26. iii. 5, 12, 21.

According to our commentator there can be no worse symptom about us—no greater evil or danger befall us, than to have the fear of God freely circulating in our hearts: according to the Scripture, it is the sure sign of perseverance, and the constant friendly attendant of all who are saved*.—If we have any ear for the truth, can

* *Jer.* xxxii. 40. *Heb.* xii. 28, 29.

we miss perceiving how ready and positive men are in calling evil good, and good evil; in putting darkness for light, and light for darkness?

The hope of the Proposition is censured thus: "It is only a carnal supposition, a vague expectation, or uncertain wish; without any foundation: and can only inspire the heart with carnal principles: for it can produce nothing but death *Rom. viii. 5---8.*" That we may see how suitably he censures the *fear* and *hope* of the Proposition as *carnal*, it will be necessary to observe in what light Paul considers *carnality*. Speaking of the influence of the national righteousness of Israel, (which was typical of another righteousness) and of his natural inclination thereto for acceptance with God, he says, *I am carnal, sold under sin, Rom. vii. 14.* Speaking of the things convenient for supporting this mortal life, and which were a peculiar part of the blessings of Israel after the flesh, in their land of promise, he calls them *carnal* things, *Rom. xv. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 11.* When he views the Corinthians glorying in their gifts, and envying one another on that account; so striving to excel therein; and calling themselves by *Paul* and *Apollos*; instead of glorying only in the *cross of Christ*; he calls them *carnal*, *1 Cor. iii. 1---4.* Opposing the apostolic weapons, for managing their war, to those which defended the old earthly kingdom of Israel, he says, they are not *carnal*, *2 Cor. x. 4.* And he calls the *law* after which Aaron was constituted a priest *carnal*, *Heb. vii. 16.* as he does also the ordinances which pertained to the old covenant, chap. ix. 10. In the New Testament, *earthly, carnal, or fleshly, and literal*

ral, most generally, have the same import, referring to the old covenant, and the state of things under it ; as *heavenly, true, and spiritual*, has to the new covenant, the antitype of the old, and the state of things under it.

I shall now consider the passage referred to in the eight chapter of the epistle to the Romans. *For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh : but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded, is death ; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace : Because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* These words, agreeable to the scope of the apostle, may, I think, be thus paraphrased :
 “ —For they that seek to be righteous by their obedi-
 “ ence to the law given to Israel, when God separated
 “ them to himself as a nation, and confirmed the pro-
 “ mise made to their fathers concerning inheriting Canaan, not
 “ understanding its figurative relation to the law of
 “ the spirit of life in Christ Jesus ; are only seeking the
 “ gratification of their appetites, in enjoying the earth-
 “ ly promises of the old covenant, not perceiving the
 “ typical reference of these to the better promises of
 “ the new covenant, the spirit of the old : But they
 “ who are looking for justification by the righteousness
 “ of faith, made manifest in the new covenant,
 “ which gives freedom from the curse of the law, and
 “ respects the Israel of God of all nations, are mind-
 “ ing the eternal life from the dead, and denying
 “ themselves as to the earthly life, after the example
 “ of

“ of him who wrought the righteousness and redeemed
“ from the curse ; and as knowing that they are, after
“ him, subjected to tribulation in this mortal life. For
“ in cleaving to the righteousness which is of the law
“ for acceptance with God, minding the enjoyments
“ and life annexed to that righteousness as its reward,
“ which only respects this present world ; there is no
“ freedom from the condemnation of the law which
“ says, cursed is every one that continueth not in all
“ things, &c. But believing in the righteousness of
“ Jesus Christ, the end of the law, which he finished
“ on the cross, for the justification of all sorts of sin-
“ ners ; and looking for the eternal life consequent
“ thereupon, which is accompanied with the mortifi-
“ cation of the natural disposition to cleave to the life
“ and righteousness which is of the law ; there is free-
“ dom from condemnation, and a right to rise again
“ from the dead and reign in life. And there is more-
“ over peace with God who maintains the honour of his
“ law punishing every transgression. And the former
“ is a state of condemnation, because every violation
“ of the holy and good law which prohibits *covetous-*
“ *ness* arises from enmity to the author of the law ; and
“ all attempts to be clear of the charge of *covetousness* by
“ striving to obey the letter of the law, fixes the mind
“ still more on the earthly life : and therefore all work-
“ ing to be righteous and to keep clear of condemna-
“ tion from the law only increases *covetousness* or
“ enlivens *concupiscence*, which springs from disaffection
“ to God, requiring love by his law : and so it is
“ impossible there should be any true subjection of heart

“ to the spiritual law, in following after righteousness
 “ in this way. This being the case, those who seek
 “ to please God, and find acceptance with him by
 “ obeying the letter of the law, cannot attain what
 “ they are seeking after.” See *Heb. xi. 6.*

The apostle has here in view his *kinsmen* according to the *flesh*, who had a *zeal of God*, but not according to *knowledge*, being ignorant of *God's righteousness*, and going about to establish their *own*: and he opposes them to the true Israel, or Israel after the spirit, who deny, and strive against the righteousness of the flesh, foregoing its earthly reward, and making rich towards God. And there may be a suitable application of what he says of the *flesh*, to all who go about to establish a righteousness upon their christian profession, thanking God, they are not *profligates*, *infidels* nor *heretics*. But this passage is so far from militating against the doctrine of believers standing in awe of the divine wrath, and of perishing by cleaving to this present world, and to the righteousness which is of the law, that it clearly implies it. And Paul, in this epistle, addressing the gentile believer, as tinctured with the spirit of the comment, checks his towering imagination thus: *Boast not against the branches:—Be not high minded, but fear.—Take heed lest he also spare not thee.*

The Christian's hope must have the same *certainty* that his faith has; and his faith again, must have the same certainty that the truth he believes has; and that truth must have the same certainty that the testimony on whose credit it rests has. If this connection is broken, christianity itself is rendered uncertain. These random expressions

expressions "carnal supposition, vague expectation, uncertain wish,*" forbid any treatment but contempt.

It may now be proper to observe how the commentator turns aside the authority that would seem to come from the scriptures referred to in the Proposition for its illustration.

He says, "The scriptures quoted in proof of the hope, do prove it to be of such a nature, as is absolutely incompatible with such a fear as is described.— *And hope that maketh not ashamed. The confidence and the rejoicing of the hope. No fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.†*" And is not *Rom. v. 5. 1 John iv. 17, 18.* brought to shew, that the fear which has torment is cast out when love is perfected, by the Holy Ghost shedding abroad in the heart an abundant sense of that love which was manifested in the atonement? Is it not fully implied in the Proposition, that the assurance of hope by perfect love, is incompatible with that fear which gives torment: and that while a Christian is tormented with fear about falling short of eternal blessedness with all the redeemed when Jesus shall appear the second time, he is not made perfect in love? But it is a false inference from these texts, that "it is impossible —fear which hath torment, should cohabit with the true christian hope."

From this rash inference, we may perceive something of the *energy of error*, or *strong delusion* of which Paul speaks; or of the most delusive operation of its spirit in leading professors of christianity to accommodate the

* Pag. 41. † Pag. 39.

Scripture to the enjoyment of that pleasure and delight which flows from their corrupt notion of the Gospel.

The apostle John does not intimate that every one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, so as to have God dwelling in him, is, at the same time, delivered from the painful fear of falling away, in the view of the many instances of apostacy recorded in the Scripture: He does not say, whoever have the love of God in them, have, from thence, tormenting fear cast out: But he says, *There is no fear in love* (it is perfect love he is speaking of) and PERFECT LOVE *casteth out fear*:—The plain inference from this is, that *fear* continues till *love* is made perfect. Love is perfected by *experience*, or *enjoyment*: even as the saints are perfected, when they come to enjoy that in heaven, which they believed on earth. This *perfect love* made *new* the commandment of brotherly love which Jesus gave to his disciples in the days of his flesh: So John calls it both *old* and *new*, 1 John ii. 7, 8. This *thing*, (perfected love) John says, *is true in him* (Christ). It was true in him when he received the full and most glorious enjoyment of the Father's love—was made most blessed forever in his presence, (*Psal.* xxi. 6.) after his soul had been in *darkness*,—exceeding sorrowful to death. And John further says, it is true *in you*. It was true in the believers of Christ's resurrection when the *Holy Ghost*—the *Spirit of adoption*—the *comforter*, was given them after they had been filled with sorrow about the death and the departure of Jesus.

This perfect love being in the first believers, particularly the apostles, made them “bold” and “not ashamed”

shamed" in the profession of Christ's "Name;" and in the declaration of his resurrection: and it yielded *boldness* in "meditating terror," and thinking on the time when the "devouring fire" shall make the "sinners in "Zion afraid," and "surprise the hypocrite with fear-fulness."

But John points out who it is that still have this *perfected love*, and we may be sure no others have it, let them flame with as high pretensions as they will: It is he that *keepeth his word*, chap. ii. 5. iv. 12. The word of Christ here is his commandment, chap. ii. 4, 7. given to his disciples before he died and rose again, so called "old," and made "new" to them on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was given to them and love perfected with them.—Tho' love *perfected with us*, is not that fulness of love and joy experienced by those who are present with the *Lord* and absent from the *body*, yet it is an earnest or foretaste of it; and therefore it is called *perfect*. Now those who have a fear that torments them in thinking on the day of Judgment, when sin shall meet its full reward, lest they should fall thro' unbelief, and appear among the hypocrites, are not made perfect in love: but they may yet love that display of divine mercy which appears in the *atonement*, believing therein, and having a good hope afforded thereby. So the apostle Paul, *Rom. v. 1—5.* gives us to understand that a person may have faith and peace with God through Christ, to carry him patiently through tribulation, before he has that hope which maketh not ashamed, and which takes place by the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which
God

God gives *to them that obey him*. And this is not the first commencement of hope in the heart, but the assurance of hope: for hope commences with faith: *faith* is the substance of things *hoped* for.

The commentator says, "The Lord, *Luk. xii. 5.* does "not forewarn his disciples to fear being cast into hell; "but to stand in awe of him who possesses all power." What a regard is here shewn to the words of *the Lord*! Does not the text direct us to fear him who has power, to destroy both soul and body in hell?—If Christ *forewarns* his disciples not to fear those who can only kill the body, then this must carry in it, their not fearing any torment *which* such can inflict as extending no further than the body; so, his saying, *Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (*Mat. x. 28.*) must include in it the fear of eternal destruction of soul and body in hell; in proportion as the fear of man prevails. And we may well say that whoever can perceive no motive to fear arising from the eternal destruction of soul and body in hell are utterly ignorant of the God of the ancient Christians. *Heb. xii. 28, 29.* This last cited passage authorises us to say, who ever have the clearest view of God's *grace* have the deepest impression of his *fear*.

"Paul, *1 Cor. ix. 27.* he says, does not suggest a "fear of eternal perdition, which (according to the "strong confidence he frequently expresses) was impossible for him to apprehend: But his concern was "for the success of the Gospel; lest its progress "should be hindered: and the virtue of his ministry

“lost. See ver. 12*.” In looking back to the foregoing part of the chapter, we may see the *power* which he had, as well as other apostles, to lay the expence of his food and raiment upon the churches. And in the 12 verse, we may see Paul and Barnabas, the apostles of the Gentiles, had rather the lead of the apostles of the Circumcision, in exercising this power in the gentile churches: but they did not use their power lest they should hinder the Gospel of Christ. We may also perceive how this power might be abused to mind *earthly things*, and engage the affections towards the old covenant and the righteousness of the law; as some of the teachers of the circumcision did in fact. To prevent this, we see Paul setting himself as an example to the Ephesian elders, *Act. xx. 33, 34, 35.* From ver. 24. Paul sets forth the christian warfare under the notion of a *race*; with an incorruptible crown (a crown of righteousness *2 Tim. iv. 8.*) at the end thereof as its reward:—————And his *running*, and *fighting* and *keeping under his body* was his conflict with the *world* and his *own righteousness*, (*Rom. vii. 15—25.*) and he is telling us, that if he did not gain the victory, then at the conclusion of his race and conflict, instead of receiving the *crown*, he would be *cast* into outer darkness along with other reprobates. But it appears as necessary to look forwards into the next chapter as backwards in this. The last words in this chapter furnished an occasion to remind the Corinthians, (who had slackened in their christian race) of the apostacy and consequent per-

dition of many of the members of Israel after the flesh, who were baptized into Moses, and did eat the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink, and yet were overthrown in the wilderness; on which he says, *Now these things were our example,——Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* And he brings forth this awful conclusion: WHEREFORE LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH, TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.

There is no Christian, however eminent in gifts and experience, but has still need to take heed in the same way. Nor is there any thing he says about the consequence of his growing weary in his warfare, inconsistent with the strong confidence and the assured hope he had about his own victory. The truth, that he that believeth shall be saved, is no way inconsistent with the truth, that *only* he who endureth unto the end shall be saved.

We are told, “The coming short, *Heb. iv. 1.* plainly appears by the context, to have no respect to eternal glory, but to spiritual consolation, in this “present life*.” But this remark is rather the effect of backwardness to admit any thing inconsistent with his fixed scheme of christianity, than of any attention to the context of this passage.

(1) The apostle makes God’s resting from his work at the creation, and his resting from working to bring Israel into rest in Canaan, typical of Christ’s working

* Pag. 42.

to bring his people into rest. Concerning the rest at creation, he says, *and God did rest the seventh day from all his works*, chap. iv. 4. Concerning the rest from the divine working in bringing Israel out of the house of bondage, through the red sea and the wilderness, into the promised Canaan, he says, *if they shall enter into my rest*, ver. 3, 5. and chap. iii. 18. Concerning the true eternal rest, and the typical reference of the two former thereto, he says, *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his*. (2) He makes Israel's Gospel, or promise of entering into the rest in Canaan, and their *unbelief*, typical of the Gospel or promise of entering into the true eternal rest, and the *unbelief* through which many of the professed Israel of God fall short of eternal rest. Of the typical unbelief, he says, *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?* chap. iii. 18. Of the true unbelief, he says, *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*, ver. 12. *Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief*, chap. iv. 11. And of the typical and antitypical Gospel, he says, *For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard*. (3) The rest which Jesus entered into when he had finished his work, is the infinite delight and pleasure he takes in that work, with the exceeding fulness of joy which he has from the light of his Father's countenance who is *well pleased* in him and his work.—It is the
glory

glory which followed his *sufferings*. So the apostle makes the antitype of the *holiest of all*, God's resting place in Canaan, where he had rested with Israel, *Psal.* cxxxii. 8, 14. *2 Chron.* vi. 41. to be *heaven it self*, chap. ix. 24. The divine Three are manifest in all these different *workings*, and their corresponding *rests*. And as God smelled a *sweet savor*, or a *savor of rest*, in Noah's offering after drowning the world, *Gen.* viii. 20, 21. So did he in the *one offering* of Christ, *Eph.* v. 2. (4) The *rest* which Jesus is entered into, *having ceased from his own works*, as God did from his work at the creation, and his work in Egypt, the red sea, the wilderness, and settling Israel in Canaan, is the rest set before the Hebrews, with the awful example of many in Israel who came short of *rest* with God; falling in the wilderness thro' unbelief; on which the apostle says, *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*, chap. iv. 1. (5) Those who believe what God has promised concerning the eternal rest, or the Gospel about it, are said to enter into it: But this entrance have all who believe in the righteousness of their God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and so they rest from their own working to establish their own righteousness, and rejoicing with exceeding joy in another righteousness already finished; as Paul says, *Rom.* iv. 5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*. And *Heb.* iv. 3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest*. The Scripture makes it plain enough that God's ancient nation of Israel were typical of His holy nation, redeemed

redeemed out of every nation; their inheritance and rest, of the eternal heavenly inheritance and rest into which Jesus is entered. And the rest is *one*; first entered into by *faith* in the Gospel concerning it; and then by *sight*, or present enjoyment: first in ceasing from our own self justifying labor; and then from our labor in bearing the cross, and ministering to the saints, in conformity to the righteousness by which we have rest, having this labor *following us* *. (6) As the fear, mentioned in this text, is a fear of coming short of the eternal rest into which Jesus is entered, the true Canaan, and heavenly inheritance of the saints, after the example of unbelieving Israel, who perished in the wilderness; so, it includes in it, the fear of God's displeasure, as represented in the case of those who fell in the wilderness, concerning whom God swore in his wrath they should not enter into his rest. Instead of *fearing* every one his *own* falling short thro' *an evil heart of unbelief*, as Paul here calls the hebrews to *fear*, they feared that God either could not or would not perform his promise, but that the whole nation should fall short. They feared the difficulties before them more than the displeasure of the author of the promise to give the nation rest; and returning back into Egypt was more acceptable to them than facing the tribulation that laid in the way to the promised rest, Num. xiii. 26—38. and xiv. 1—4. So they fell in the wilderness and came to know God's *breach of promise*, ver. 34. Yet God performed his promise to *Abraham*,

* Rev. xiv. 13. Mat. xxv. 34——36.

Isaac, and Jacob, and brought their seed into rest.

Now it will be well for us to consider the apostle's language, in his admonitions, to *fear and take heed*, in this epistle to the hebrews, who were ready to be discouraged at parting with their earthly inheritance and righteousness, and in the view of the much tribulation through which they were to enter into the *heavenly country*; and who needed to be reminded of the awful example of Israel's unbelief; of the terrible consequence of falling away after illuminations, and tasting the good word of God, from the fiery indignation at the judgment; of the courage of those who obtained a good report thro' faith, &c.

From *Phil.* ii. 12. he observes, "The salvation *here* has no respect to obtaining eternal life: but salvation from disobedient conduct, evil conversation, and sinful companions. See ver. 15. *AE.* ii. 40.*" Well, and if salvation from these take not place, what shall we say about *eternal life*? Will not "disobedient conduct" denominate persons *children of disobedience* against whom the wrath of God is pointed? *Eph.* v. 6. *Col.* iii. 6. And what shall we say about standing in the company of such as have something of the *form*, but hate the *power* of godliness? Must we *not* say, they belong to that apostate church, concerning which it is said,—*come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:—Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God*

who judgeth her. We may, very agreeably to the scope of the New Testament, say, that those who apprehend no further danger attends disobedience, in the professors of Christianity, than some troubles which they choose to call *fatherly chastisements*, are as little acquainted with the grace of God that bringeth *salvation*, as “disobedient, evil” or “sinful” persons, of what ever kind. I shall only observe further here, that *Act. ii. 40.* is a call to the Jews who believed, to separate from their country men the adversaries of the truth: These words were spoken to such as were separated from the world, and settled in the gospel order, having bishops and deacons set among them.

The commentator inquires, what the fear and hope of the Proposition are springs of*.—The Proposition itself seems to tell him, they are springs in the heart of a Christian UNTO ALL HIS WARFARE. But then if he take the Proposition as it says, and suppose them springs to obedience, self-denial, &c. “This would be a contradiction to the preceding Proposition; which “suggests these things to be the springs of hope.” The preceding Proposition suggests those things to be the *effects of faith*—to be *produced by the special influence of the Gospel*: it supposes *faith* to work by *love*, and the blessing of the Holy Ghost to be promised and given to the *faithful*, thus obedient to the commandment requiring love: This Proposition asserts, that hope and fear are springs to the Christian warfare; or that they both engage to the *obedience*, and the *good fight of faith*, which

* Pag. 40.

has the promise of *bleſſing from God*. Thus the two Propositions contradict each other.

But the commentator favours us with the "truth" of the matter concerning obtaining reſt with Chriſt at his ſecond coming. "Reſt at Chriſt's coming, he ſays, "centers alone in the ſovereign pleaſure of God. *Mat. xx. 23. Luk. xii. 32.* Neither the hope nor fear, virtue or performance, of any creature, has any influence thereinto; either to obtain, or fall ſhort: as every believer upon earth knows. *Rom. ix. 16. Gal. iii. 18*.*" The Scripture makes it certain enough that thoſe who obtain reſt at Chriſt's coming were appointed thereto, before any creature had reſt with God in any ſenſe, from eternity; and that all the elect or the innumerable company, the holy nation, conſiſting of men out of every nation, ſhall certainly enter into reſt and not one individual come ſhort. The unbelief of ſome who profeſs the truth ſhall not make the faith of God without effect. And Chriſt *having obtained eternal redemption* for his people, **the predeſtinated ſeed**, has entered into the HOLY PLACE, into reſt, and thereby ſecured the entrance of every one with whom he took part in fleſh and blood. *So all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved.* But again, it is no leſs certain that many pretending to be of Iſrael, with their *form of Godlineſs*, ſhall not enter into the promiſed reſt, but fall through unbelief and diſobedience, even as many in the typical Iſrael fell ſhort of the typical reſt. And every one engaged in the

* Pag. 41.

christian profession must labor to enter into it in the way God has appointed, which is the way of self-denial and keeping the commandment of brotherly love; lest, after all their high pretensions to enlightenings, and tastings of the good word of God, they fall away and perish eternally: For these things may take place and not accompany salvation: These things may be where the work and labor of love is not: many professors of the Gospel may have the waterings of the Spirit*, and yet bring forth no fruit to perfection, but become offended with the cross and tribulation, and faint at the thought of the work of faith and labor of love: and therefore every professor of the faith is called to fear, lest a promise being left of the believers entering into God's rest, *he himself* fall short of it thro' unbelief; or as having only *faith*, and no works, which is *dead being alone*. See *Mat.* xxv, 12, 13. vii. 20—23. *Luke* xiii. 24, 27.

In order to oppose the sovereignty of God in determining the persons who shall *reign in life by Christ Jesus*, to the fear of falling short and hope of attaining a crown of glory, influencing Christians to their warfare, we have *Mat.* xx. 23. cited. It would seem the question proposed to Jesus, ver. 21. came in consequence of the answer given to Peter's question in the former chapter, ver. 28. Zebedee's children were for being on the thrones nearest to Christ. The reply gave them to understand they were in the dark concerning the proper

* Compare *Mat.* vii. 21. 1 *Cor.* xii. 3. *Mat.* xiii. 20, 21. 2 *Pet.* ii. 20, 21.

import of their question, and concerning the tribulation which laid in the way to such eminent preferment. Jesus shews that his Father's appointment has settled who shall sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom; and he shews no less that those who are predestinated to his kingdom, are also predestinated to a conformity to him, in his sufferings, (*Rom. viii. 29.*) that they may have *fellowship* with him therein and so *reign with him*. If we pay due regard to the words of Christ in this passage we shall see it necessary to consider this important question with some attention, when we think of a place in the kingdom of Christ at the resurrection of the just: Are we *suffering* and *serving* with him in this world? The Scripture seems to represent the children of the heavenly kingdom, while in this world, *companions in tribulation and patience*: and Paul expressly says—*all that will live GODLY in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*. What then shall we think of persons endeavouring to set the sovereign determinations of God in a light inconsistent with the fear of falling short and hope of attaining to the everlasting kingdom influencing us in our christian race to press forwards towards that kingdom? I may add a light inconsistent with the Scripture connection between *suffering* with Jesus here, and *reigning* with him hereafter.

In *Rom. ix. 16.* respect is had to *receiving the Gospel*: for Paul, in that chapter, is treating on God's rejecting the Jews, *his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh*: and he shews us that he had as little about him to move
 God's

God's compassion to him, as those whom he rejected and hardened against the Gospel to their destruction. It is obvious from Paul's manner of treating on that subject, that *willing* and *running* brings no person one step nearer faith in the righteousness of God. This he resolves wholly into sovereign mercy. So himself was brought to the faith in Christ, who was a blasphemer and a persecutor,—*wishing to be separated from Christ*; while others, in like circumstances with himself, were left of God to stumble and fall, and be broken, and snared, and taken. After referring to God's dealing with Pharaoh and Esau, as patterns of his dealing with the rejected Jews, he thus concludes: *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.* On men's coming to the faith, Paul says, *It is not of him that—runneth*: on believers coming to glory, he says, *So run that ye may obtain.* And this seems to comport with the doctrine of his Lord, who says, respecting coming to the knowledge of the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man,—*He is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil*: But respecting those engaged in the Christian profession and the time when he shall come in flaming fire, he says, *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

It is not necessary here to consider Gal. iii. 18. as it would only be a repetition of what has been before noted from Hebrews chap. iii. and iv. The inconsistency which many, as well as the commentator, would willingly find between the doctrine of the Proposition and the inheritance being sure by promise to all the holy seed, arises from an aversion to the self-denial of the

the New Testament: and men naturally incline to harden themselves in that aversion, and fortify themselves against the fear of the wrath to come; and nothing the less that they are tall professors of christianity, and have a friendly intercourse open with the Deity.

But, after all, our commentator finds a *rest*, towards enjoying which we must know, that *fear* and *hope* truly animate the Christian. And he is ready to assure us that our diligence, seriousness, patience, and humility in searching the Scripture, meditation, &c. may be very conducive to our enjoyment*. He calls this "a spiritual rest in Christ, by faith." But if we are minding the Scripture, we must say that the righteousness which gives *rest*, as soon as believed, is unto and upon all the believers of it without difference. Being weak or strong in believing makes not any difference here. If we mean any other thing when we speak of a *spiritual rest by faith*, than believing in the divine righteousness, so having boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the heavenly sanctuary where he is *resting*, our meaning does not rest on revelation. And tho' the Scripture does countenance us in speaking of the faithful having more abundant entrance than when they first believe, yet it does not represent this to be by *faith*, but *enjoyment*, or experience; a foretaste of the abundant entrance at death and the resurrection, which has been already considered in speaking of the assurance of hope. But what shall we think of this same *spiritual rest by faith*, and the *devotion*, &c. conducive

* Pag. 41. 42.

to it, when we see such scriptures referred to as speak of an *incorruptible crown*; of the *resurrection of the dead*, and the *prize of the high calling*; and of having an abundant entrance *into the everlasting kingdom*? If we are indeed attending to and understanding the Scripture, can we miss of perceiving how utterly foreign it is thereto, to speak of any sort of *work* or *devotion* being conducive to “a spiritual rest in Christ by faith?”

It may now be necessary to take notice of some passages of Scripture which the commentator lays before us as a specimen of the Christian's language *. The first is from Job, *I know that my redeemer liveth*. In the same chapter Job says, *He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him, as one of his enemies*. Tho' I am not satisfied that the commentator has much considered Job's reply, chap. xix. yet if he have no other intention than to represent Christians as assured of Christ's being alive from the dead, and of his second coming, I have no reason to differ with him: and if he be for applying the words he has cited to every Christian, as his very language, with a strong emphasis on the word *my*, supposing Job to be personating Christians, enough may be found in the language of Job, to shew the folly of any such universal application. We have further the Christian's language laid before us in the words of Paul, *I know whom I have believed*. I agree that all who indeed believe and understand the Gospel, know from whom it comes; they know it is the word of God. Next we have the words of the

* Pag. 43.

apostles respecting themselves "*We know that he abideth in us.*" But he has not here given us so many of John's words as to gather his sense. John is shewing how the apostles knew this: *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* But the apostles had not this knowledge when they first became Christians, or disciples. The Holy Ghost was not then given them; and yet they could speak the Christian's language. Our commentator is here again at his work of confounding what the Scripture carefully distinguishes. Again, we have the words of Paul, *Being confident of this very thing.* Here I acknowledge that all Christians are ready to say, with Paul, "God, who begins the good work of faith, and labor of love in men will perform the same till the day of Christ Jesus." It is further observed concerning the Christian's language, that "He is inspired with this strong pronunciation; *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*" We see many persons who pretend to be inspired in this manner whose conduct evidently give the lie to their "strong pronunciation," being the very reverse of Paul's: Many good Christians are pretending to *count all things loss*, &c. who yet hate not the Devil more than they do the cross of Christ, or having *fellowship with him in his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* They can "strongly pronounce,———" while they are ridiculing the plainest things in the Gospel, laughing at the tokens of brotherly love which Christ has appointed, and *deriding him for saying, Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* One might indeed be surprised

prised in balancing the confident pretensions of some professors, to the divine favour, and their boasted certainty of future felicity; with their grounds of such *confidence* and *certainty*, together with their *faith* and *works*; were it not that the Scripture has given us broad hints of what we may expect to see in the *last days* *.

The comment on this Proposition closes with giving the apparent character of its author, who is accounted, “a perfect stranger to the power of the Gospel and a perfect blunderer in the theory,” as to which, the author of the Propositions has no inclination to maintain a controversy with his commentator.

But it is a fit and proper thing, that those who have drawn a scheme of christianity, partly from the *Jew* and partly from the *Greek*, should esteem the simple truth concerning Jesus Christ and him crucified, partly a *stumbling-block* and partly *foolishness*.

P R O P. 14.

It seems this proposition leaves us at an uncertainty what it intends when it speaks of *pastors* or *elders*; tho' yet the name *pastor* cannot justly be applied to any but a minister, or preacher of the word! But how is the name *minister* more determinate? Is not this a name applied to all sorts of officers in the church of God? “An elder, we are told, is a general term, for any kind of officer, intrusted with oversight and government, in

* See 2 *Tim.* chap. 3.

“state,

“state, country, city, or the church of God.” Tho’ our chief concern is to know to whom the apostles have applied the name in the churches, or whom they intend by it, yet it may be observed, it is not a name indeterminately applied, in the Scripture, to all sorts of persons bearing office, in either, state, country, city or the church of God. We see the elders of Israel distinguished from the *Captains* of the tribes, and the *Officers*, *Deut.* xxix. 10. xxxi. 28. and from the Princes, *Ezr.* x. 8. and from the Priests, *Lam.* i. 19. iv. 16. *Mat.* xxvi. 59. xxviii. 11, 12. and from the Scribes, *Mat.* xvi. 21. xxvii. 41. *Mar.* viii. 31. xiv. 43. *Act.* iv. 5.

Elders is the english word for the greek *presbyters*. And that the apostles intend the same order of officers, by *elders*, and *bishops* is very clear. For,

1. Their work, is the same. So Paul warning the *elders* of the church at Ephesus, whom he also calls *bishops*, (*Act.* xx. 28.) makes their work to consist in *feeding the church of God*. And Peter, in like manner, exhorting the *elders*, calls them to *feed the flock of God, taking the oversight*, or exercising the *bishop’s* office *not by constraint, but willingly*, 1 *Pet.* v. 1, 2.

2. Their character is also the same. Paul says to Titus, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain ELDERS in every city,—if any be blameless,—for a BISHOP must be blameless, &c.* *Tit.* i. 5—9. 1 *Tim.* iii. 1—7.

Elders, then, are called *bishops*; The *work* of *elders* and *bishops* is the same, and their *qualifications* the same.

The

The apostles, beside their extraordinary office as apostles, were also *elders* ; so Peter and John call themselves *elders*, 1 *Pet.* v. 1. 2 *John.* 1. They were the eldership or presbytery, of the church at Jerusalem, at the first: but afterwards we see elders in that church distinguished from the apostles. *Act.* xv. 2, 4, 22, 23. xvi. 4. But we no where see deacons called elders: and they may with the same propriety be called *bishops*, *pastors*, or *teachers* that they can be called *elders*. The laborer in the word and doctrine, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. is not distinguished from a *ruling* elder below a bishop, pastor, or minister of the word, whether he be called a deacon, or by any other name. Such an elder is no where mentioned. we have neither his work nor character hinted at in any shape: so he cannot be an officer in any pure church of Christ. But the elders who *labor in the word and doctrine*, are distinguished from the elders who *rule well*, by applying the word of God to the conversation of the flock, and who give themselves chiefly to this branch of the elder's work, and do not mostly labor in *teaching*, or informing the understanding of the flock in *the mystery of the faith*: nor in the *word* of exhortation: Tho' *teacher* is a name common to all elders, yet it eminently belongs to him who employs himself in that particular branch of the elder's office, called *teaching*: so we see him that *teacheth* distinguished from him that *ruleth*, and from him that *exhorteth*, *Rom.* xii. 7, 8. And tho' *ruling* eminently designs a particular branch of the elder's office, yet it comprehends the whole office; and *ruler* is a name common to all elders. See *Heb.* xiii. 17. 1 *Tim.* iii. 5.

Q

The

The commentator says, the elders, “that labor in the word, are distinguished from the other.*” He must here I think be aiming to distinguish between *bishops* and *deacons*; for he again says, “We find no distinct account of any other officers, or elders, in the church, besides these two, *bishops and deacons*.†” And so the deacons are only a kind of supernumerary officers who must lend their “assistance occasionally.” But it cannot be shewn where these sort of officers have any appointment in the apostles writings. The *deacon's* work is as constant as the *bishop's*; and whether there be persons set apart for that work in a church in distinction from the bishops, or not, their work must be constantly done, or that church is not a *true church of God*.

It is observed, that “The apostles did for some time perform every part of the ministerial office, in the church at Jerusalem: which is a full demonstration, that no other order of ministers, or elders, is essentially necessary.‡” As the apostles were qualified for doing every part of the ministerial work in the church, so they did, for some time, perform the work of both bishops and deacons; and this may stand for a demonstration that the deacons work may be done by the bishops, and that, to have men set apart to *serve tables*, in distinction from those that have the *ministry of the word*, is not essential to the being of a church. While the apostles could perform the work for which the first deacons were appointed, without leaving the word of

* Pag. 44. † Pag. 45. ‡ Pag. 44.

God, they did; but when the number of the disciples was multiplied, it then became necessary to appoint other men over that business. We are taught to esteem the occasion of this appointment of deacons "a defect which was in the church:" The defect then must be this: the apostles could not sufficiently minister to the poor, without being taken off from *prayer*, and *the ministry of the word*. The commentator's saying "It were to be wished, that no other order might be found necessary in the churches of Christ,*" we must take to be the same as saying, "It were to be wished the churches of Christ might not be overstock'd with poor members;" or "It were to be wished there might not be occasion for the *apostles' fellowship* in the churches of Christ:" and it must be acknowledged, many churches, *called by his name*, see no necessity for that fellowship; or however not so much as to practise it.

It seems we must look upon "faithful ministers of Christ, as properly the successors of the apostles, in all things that remain necessary in the church, to the end of the world." The apostles, as apostles or ambassadors for Christ, are not succeeded by any order of ministers, but by their *writings* only; like as the Old-Testament church in the days of Jesus Christ had the successors of *Moses and the Prophets*, in having their writings, *Luk. xvi. 31*. And it will "remain necessary" that the churches have them to the end of the world: and if they had not still the apostles they could not have any use for *bishops and deacons*.

* Pag. 44.

We have the following remarks on the deacon's work: "—the other, (deacons) occasional assistants to those ministers, in such cases as should be found needful. And these deacons might be blessed with gifts differing; and likewise there might be different occasions; so as some of them might be more particularly appointed to, or employed in government, keeping peace and order; and others in disposing the temporal concerns of the church: which are only different branches of the same office. 1 *Pet.* iv. 11.*" But this passage does not point out a distinction in the deacon's office. It distinguishes the deacon's *gift* from the elder's by *ministring*, and the elder's from the deacon's by *speaking*; as the elder's qualification is distinguished from the deacon's in this, that he must be *apt to teach*. And Paul distinguishes the elder's *gift* by *prophesying*, and the deacons by *ministring*. *Rom.* xii. 6, 7. And he distinguishes the former of these *gifts* into *teaching, exhortation, and ruling*; and the latter into *giving, and shewing mercy*. And at the first ordination of deacons we have their work distinguished by the *ministry of tables*, and the elder's by the *ministry of the word*. But to talk of the deacons being appointed to *government, keeping peace and order*, is not scriptural. It is not to be found where *government* is made his work. His work must be pointed out in those texts; or it cannot be determined by the Scripture. *Act.* vi. 1, 2. *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose*

Prop. 14 Mr. Johnson's Com. considered. 173

a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Rom. xii. 7. 8. Or ministry, on ministring:—He that giveth, with simplicity;—he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. 1 Pet. iv. 11. If any man minister, as of the ability which God giveth.

He would willingly have the name *evangelist* given to the ministers of the gospel: But he should have first shewn us, where the occasion is now for any minister of the gospel to do the work of an evangelist. And he would have it observed, that “when the Lord and his “disciples first sat down together as a church, to eat the “Lord’s supper; there was only one acting elder among “them.”——But he should also have observed, that this *elder* was the chief *Shepherd*, who was to furnish all the spiritual gifts his church should have occasion for, when he came to be anointed with the Holy Ghost. *Eph. iv. 8, 11.* And he should also have observed, that, Jesus not having yet ascended, those *gifts* were not yet bestowed, nor the New Testament Church order begun. He should further have observed, that the pride of the christian rulers, prompting them to personate Christ, and strive for pre-eminence in the brotherhood*, was the beginning of what came to perfection in him who,

* See 3 John.

as God, sat in the temple of God shewing himself to be God—that mystery of iniquity, conceived in the apostle's days ; and whom they observed struggling towards the *single bishop* :—This was his birth. And where ever we see a bishop governing a church by himself, or holding the pre-eminence therein above other elders, we see an *antichrist*, who is, in that thing, *gone out* from the apostles : and in that thing, they have their part in denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

The commentator says, “When the Lord gave “authority to the twelve he spake to Peter in the singular number, *Mat*, xvi. 19.—hence it appears that “the full power was given to each individual.” The full power of what ?——The full power of overseeing and ruling a church ? The full power to open the mystery of the old earthly kingdom, which vailed, while it, prefigured the heavenly kingdom, was given to Peter, when Jesus sat down on the throne of that kingdom, *Act*. ii. 14——36. And the full power to shew whose sins are remitted, and whose are retained was given to all the apostles. But when Jesus comes in the next chapter but one (*Mat*. xviii.) to speak of binding and loosing, in the way of discipline, and ruling in a *church*, then he takes care to shew them, that, that work could not be done by a less number than *two** of them. ver. 19. It

* Whether we attend to what occurred while the kingdom of heaven was only at hand, or after it was come, we shall not find any thing to countenance the *one minister*. When Christ sent the twelve to preach repentance

Prop. 14 Mr. Johnson's Com. considered. 175

It is further observed that, "The faithful ministers of Christ, to the end of the world, must needs retain full power to put in execution those rules which the apostles left upon record: or otherwise, the promise of Christ would fail, of being with his church always." But it must first be shewn where Christ has left any such promise, as being with a single executor of the discipline of his churches, before such a reason can be worth hearing. When Christ promises his presence herein, the promise stands thus—*if TWO of you shall agree on earth—For where TWO or THREE are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* As to the promise, *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.* Christ does not speak to them, as each the bishop of a church. And when they came to execute their commission and had planted churches, they ordained elders in every one of them, to feed them with knowledge, and so commended them to God and to the word of his grace. "And since he has not limited any number, &c." But he has limited the least number that can rule a church, which is TWO. And the number upwards is not limited. "But Paul takes the authority as invested in the singular number. *1 Cor. vii.*

penitance to Israel, he sent them *by two and two, Mar. vi. 7. Mat. x. 2, 3, 4.*—When he appointed the seventy, he sent them *two and two before his face into every city, Luk. x. 1.* When Samaria received the word of God, *two* of the apostles were sent to them from Jerusalem, *Act. viii. 14.* And when Peter was called to the Gentiles, having none of the apostles with him, he took certain brethren who appear to have been ministers, *Act. x. 23, 48.*

“vii. 10. 1 *Tim*, iv. 11.”——But how does Paul take the authority in the singular number? Did ever Paul (or any other apostle) take the authority to exercise discipline in a church, and to govern it by himself? Paul took it, that he had authority from the Lord to fix laws in a church, who had then its elders to rule it. And he gave authority to Timothy to command and teach certain things, in a church which had its elders beside him, and to charge the *teachers* of that church concerning their doctrine. 1 *Tim*. i. 3. *Act*. xx. 17.

The commentator roundly asserts, that, “where
“there is a number of believers, united in the Spirit,
“and a duly qualified, minister among them; there
“are all the essentials of a church of Christ.”——It is necessary here to put the question, Who told him so? There was a number of believers, united in the spirit, and a duly qualified minister among them, at *Antioch*, and yet there does not appear to be all the essentials of a church, nor are they called the church till that minister departed and brought another minister with him; and then they both continued assembling themselves with the church a whole year, *Act*. xi, 22—27. And they were not sent from that church till the number of ministers were increased, *Act*. xi. 27, 30. chap. xii. 25. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

But what shall we say to this question: “Since no
“positive direction is given, by Christ or his apostles,
“in this case,—By what authority does any deny
“the existence of a true church of Christ, without such
“a number?”* May we not say, the direction of

* Pag. 46.

Christ, and the practice of the apostles too, has been produced, and which cannot be contradicted without manifest perverseness, and injury to Christ's direction, and to the apostles conduct? Let me now propose a question: By what authority does any man take upon him to defend the *single bishop*, when no mention is made, nor example can be produced, of him, any where in the New Testament: but every where, and in all the churches, where we have any account of the matter, there always appears a company? Many churches have been instanced, in every one of which, *a company* are pointed out so plainly, that it is impossible we should be mistaken; and, 'since no positive direction is given by Christ or his apostles,' nor any one instance to be found of the *one bishop*, by what authority do any take upon them to set him up?—We are told, "The number is not fixed; any otherwise than the number of disciples, and circumstances of the church make necessary." But where have we mention made of the number of disciples and the circumstances of the churches making more elders necessary? A church cannot consist of more disciples than can come together into *one place* to eat the Lord's supper, the great end of their coming together.

The commentator thinks, that "as to the ordination of elders in every church and city, *Act. xiv. 23.* *Tit. i. 5.* nothing can be gathered from these phrases whereby it can be determined, whether there were more than one, in one place: there are mentioned a plurality of churches, and cities, as well as elders." But the churches, and cities, are expressed in the singular

gular number ; and the elders in the plural : and if we can gather nothing from this to determine us, I have no more to say. For if the order of speech is not to be regarded, it is impossible to find any certainty in any thing that is spoken. He observes further, that, "They are called churches, before such ordination." They are called *disciples* at Antioch and Lystra, chap. xiii. 52. xiv. 20. and in general thro' all the cities; chap. xiv. 21, 22. and they are called *brethren* at Iconium, chap. xiv. 2. But they are not called *churches* till the ordination of the elders, ver. 23.

The commentator boldly steps forth to match the author of the Proposition, *whoever he be*, on the score of freedom from ALL human traditions : he does this to inform us the more gracefully that he does not perceive a plurality in the term *angel*, in the asian epistles. *Rev. i. 24.* "There probably", he says, "might be those in Thyatira, who had testified against those evil doers: tho' (like Eli) they had not put in execution the laws of God, against them: as also some who had been silent; yet had not come into their secret. And these might be distinguished by *you*, and the *rest*. Doubtless the distinction was understood, by them to whom it was immediately directed. "But we ought not to force a meaning, which the Holy Ghost hath not expressed." But if we may read this text according to our translation, *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira*,—what occasion for all this guessing, about the sense? Tho' I do not perceive what is intended, by the comment saying, we ought not to force a meaning which the Holy Ghost hath not expressed,

expressed, there being many things implied in the Scripture which are not expressed; yet when we say that the *angel* is addressed in the beginning of the epistle in the singular number, "I know thy works;" and in the 24th. verse, in the plural number, "But unto *you* I say," it is something curious to say we are *forcing* a sense to the words of the Holy Ghost.—Let the commentator, or any other person, furnish us with another sense to this verse, without altering the translation, that will not be forced, and hard too. His business was to shew us that the pronoun *you* in the 24th. verse does not respect the *angel*; for if the *angel* be designed thereby, then we have evidently a *plurality* pointed out in that name, and if so, to what purpose are we told of the name being "singular in every epistle," and of their being "represented the same precise number as the "churches?" Let what will be intended by the *angel* of the church in these epistles, we may easily perceive both *unity* and *distinction* pointed out thereby: and particular care is taken about the unity in addressing all the angels; while the distinction is observable enough, to those who have a mind to look at it, in the Thyatiran angel. And as we are sure the first of these churches had a plurality of elders, without any pre-eminence among them, we may be as sure all the rest were like it; for the apostles settled the same order and government in every church. But are we to imagine, if the name *angel* was plural in all these epistles, that this would reconcile men to the notion of a presbytery in every church, according to the history of the first churches, and the epistles of the apostles to them? We see a plurality

plurality of elders in the church at *Jerusalem*, (*Act. vi. 4. xi. 30. xv. 2, 6, 22, 23. xvi. 4.*) from which the law of the Lord came forth; and a plurality at *Antioch*, and other gentile churches to whom it came; (*Act. xiii. 1. xiv. 23.*) particularly we have a company of them set before us at *Ephesus*, and *Philippi*; (*Act. xx. 17, 28. Phil. i. 1.*) we see a plurality in a church in a *man's house**; (*Philem. 1, 2.*) and orders given for a plurality in every city in *Crete*, (*Tit. i. 5.*) and James supposes elders in every church, (*Jam. v. 14.*) and Peter in every flock: (*1 Pet. v. 2, 3.*) and if all this will not afford us light sufficient into the matter, I know not what will, if it be not the custom of our fore-fathers: I am certain, seeing *angels* instead of *angel* would not go a hair's breadth with us, when all the evidence preceding fails.

But it would not have been so suitable to the mean of correspondence these churches had with the author of the epistles, to have put the name in the plural number; for if the word signify a messenger, and the Spirit thereby designs to point more particularly at him by whom the prayers and thanksgiving of the church were sent to the Lord, at the breaking that bread and drinking that cup which shewed forth his death, the ground of their corresponding with him, then it must appear very suitable to address the church thro' him in these epistles, and to include in him all the elders, as being alternately engaged in that work.

* Our having mention made of a church being in a man's house, is an invincible argument with some for one pastor in a little church.

How

However, there appears but little reason for denying, that in the first *falling away* from the pure profession of christianity, self-seeking men might affix a sense to the address in these epistles, agreeable to their own lusts and pride; and it may be a question if this was not a remarkable means of raising one of the *presbyters* above the rest, and distinguishing him by the name of *bishop*, agreeable to his pre-eminence and wonderful importance in the Ignatian epistles.

As there is some ground for thinking, that the apostacy from the primitive, and beautiful order prescribed by Peter (1 *Epist.* v. 2, 3, 4, 5.) was forwarded by corrupting the genuine sense of the address in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia; so, when we see the ancient order revived, and the churches shewing themselves as they were at the beginning, we need be in no surprise to see the despisers of that order cleaving to the ancient corruption, as they cleave to their lives.

P R O P. 15.

Here the commentator observes, that "Christ did
" give direction to his apostles, about binding and
" loosing in his churches. But in *Mat.* xviii. he does
" not give any direction for two or three to preside as
" a presbytery. But (in case of need) to take one or
" two as witnesses: without mentioning whether they
" be in the capacity of elders, or not: only believers.
" See ver. 1—6*." In ver. 1. The disciples propose
a question to Jesus; and in the rest of the verses, cited

* Pag. 48.

in the comment, Jesus replies to their question : and hence we may gather, that the offences he gives his churches direction how to proceed in, ver. 15, 16, 17. come thro' pride; which must be forgiven, on repentance, until seventy times seven. But the Proposition neither refers to, nor speaks of the two or three, which may be necessary to appear as witnesses to confirm the offence previous to the church's censure, ver. 16, 17.— It refers to, and speaks of, another *two or three*, mentioned ver. 19. 20. The *two or three* here are not the *two or three* witnesses, ver. 16. And they are not the church; for *two or three* cannot make a church: but they are *two or three agreeing to ask the Father which is in heaven to bind or loose*, this church being immediately dependent on heaven, and independent of all power on the earth. It therefore remains they must be *two or three* presiding members in the church, in the business of its discipline, the thing treated on in this passage. And this is confirmed by the fact, in the churches planted by the apostles, unless we go by some other intelligence than their writings.

In the Letter it is said, "This church on earth was
 " to have *two or three*---gathered together, presiding
 " therein; without which presbytery we cannot
 " know from the Scripture, that they have such power;*" which is commented thus: "But if a church
 " of Christ, walking in the Spirit, do attend to the
 " rules which Christ has given; we do know from the
 " Scripture, that they have such power; tho' they be

Prop. 15 Mr. Johnson's Com. considered. 183

“not subjected to such a presbyterian hierarchy, as
“men have invented, but Christ never appointed.*”—
A very good comment——quite sufficient to shew, that
the disciples of Christ may proceed to *bind* and *loose*, in
his name, without a plurality of presbyters.—But what
shall be said concerning the “presbyterian hierarchy?”
Can the commentator point out any likeness between
the order and government asserted in the Propositions,
and that subsisting among *any sort* of Presbyterians; or
between the presbytery contended for, and “a presby-
“terian hierarchy?” And are not a synod or association
of his single bishops much more like “a presbyterian
“hierarchy?” We see more presbyters than one placed
by the apostles in the first churches, and more than one
makes a presbytery: we have also mention made of
such a presbytery, *1 Tim. iv. 14.* And how shall we
think of a presbytery, but in a congregational church,
unless we borrow our notion of it from the scotch pres-
byterians, or some such worldly establishment?

The letter-writer must know, that it was only “a
“human fiction” which led him to suppose any such
presbytery in the church at *Corinth*: but when he con-
siders, that there were those in that church to whom
the apostle required *submission*; such as labored in the
apostles doctrine, (See *1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.* compared
with *Heb. xiii. 17.*) he is apt to think the commenta-
tor is led more by “fiction” than any thing he finds in
the corinthian epistles. “Paul,” it is observed, “does
“not direct his speech to two or three presidents; but

* Pag. 48.

“to the whole body; allowing all the members to be judges.” And does he not find the letter saying,—“the two or three presidents are not independent of the church or lords over it: They are only agreeing together, along with the brotherhood?” Where does he find any thing like denying all the brethren the right of judging? The author of the Proposition indeed asserts, with the Scripture, (1 *Thef.* v. 12.) there were those who presided in the first churches, and who in judging agreed, in the first place. And it is hinted in the letter, that there is, in 1 *Cor.* v. 4. a reference to *Mat.* xviii. where we find Christ saying,——
Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Thus did Paul and Barnabas gather, or assemble, themselves in the church at Antioch, *Act.* xi. 26.

The commentator says, “The distinction about two or three to appear as witnesses; and, two or three to preside in the judgment, is an addition to the words of Christ.” It has been before shewn that such a distinction is no addition, but contained in the words of Christ. But let the passage be read, and let the reader judge between the *letter-writer* and his *commentator*. The subject treated on in this passage is the manner of dealing with offending persons in a church: and we should not forget it. (1) The first step after the offence, is for the offended brother to tell the offending brother of the offence; if he hears him, there is an end of it.

(2) If

(2) If the offender will not hear his brother by himself alone, he is directed to take with him *one* or *two* more, which, with himself, make the *two* or *three* witnesses to establish the truth of the offence. (3) If the offender neglect to hear after this step, the business then comes to the church, where the *two* or *three* before mentioned are to bear their witness. If the offending brother neglect to hear the church, his union with the brotherhood is dissolved. (5) But *again*, there is something yet said concerning this church on *earth*, respecting their binding and loosing. There is, at the least, *two* of the members distinguished from the rest, ver. 19. and who must in the first place *agree* concerning what they are to ask the confirmation of from the Father in *heaven*: and that all the members must also *agree* with them before they apply to the Father, is plain enough from ver. 17. and from the union of the body of Christ. See, 1 *Cor.* i. 10. xii. 14—27. *Phil.* ii. 2. *Eph.* iv. 3, 4. *Act.* iv. 32. It is where these *two* or *three* are that Christ promises his presence; and he does not promise his presence without them in this business.

The commentator calls this the letter-writer's "invented fiction;" and this is easily *said*; but it is beyond his ability to *prove* it.—He wants the letter-writer to keep his invented fictions to himself, "and then the words of Christ," he tells us, "in the pure light, as he gave them, do sufficiently explain themselves." And thus he has shewn us the invented fictions of the letter-writer!

He sees a "puff" and a "flourish" in the conclusion

sion of the letter which he thinks not worth a reply ; for " HE despises ALL unscriptural raptures, OF WHAT " KIND SOEVER, as much as he that wrote the letter ;" —but the letter-writer declines a dispute of this nature.

P R O P. 16.

It is here observed, that " we do not find in any of " the apostles writings, that the Lord's Supper was " eaten without a number of disciples to partake, and " a person duly qualified to administer it. *Act. xx.* " 7. *1 Cor. xi. 23.*"

But the former of these texts does not take notice of an elder, or any duly qualified person at Troas ;— and if the commentator has Paul in his view as the duly qualified person, then there were more duly qualified persons then *one*. There was *Luke* the writer of the history, and *Timothy*, and *Tychicus*, (*Eph. vi. 21. Col. iv. 7. 2 Tim. iv 12.*) and *Trophimus*, (*2 Tim. iv 20.*) and *Aristarchus*, (*Act. xix. 29. Col. iv 10, 11. Philim. 24.*) besides *Secundus*, *Sopater*, and *Gaius*. See *Act. xx. 4.*

The latter text (*1 Cor. xi. 23.*) speaks of the Lord Jesus taking bread, and giving thanks ; respecting which it is further observed, that " in the first administration of that ordinance there was no such presbytery, or plurality of elders presiding." And how should there be such before they were given ? How should we see *elders* in a *church* before there was either the one or the other ? He who took the bread and the cup and gave them to his disciples was more than a man, and could have no equal to preside with him,

nor

nor any occasion for it. But when he drunk that cup *new* with them in his fathers kingdom, we then see a plurality presiding. *Act.* vi. 4, 6.—It is further observed, “ But whether there ought to be more than one, “ their writings say nothing about it. And where the “ Scripture is silent every one that receives the kingdom of God as a little child, will be silent too.” Does he then sit down in *silence* with his church, as their president, not knowing whether he is doing right or wrong? And is this the silence of a little child? Or does he content himself because the Scripture has not said, in so many words, that one person shall not preside in a church by himself? But suppose he should be told, that “ we do not indeed find from the apostles writings, that the Lord’s Supper was eaten “ without a number of disciples coming together to “ partake; but whether there ought to be a person “ among them with the qualifications of an elder their “ writings say nothing about it:” could he pretend to say, in reply, that there is any less authority for saying this, than what he has said? Or would he like a little child receive this saying, and give up what he has before said concerning “ a person duly qualified to ad- “ minister?”

P R O P. 17.

It is here said “ Concerning the frequency, or “ stated times for eating the Lord’s Supper; we may “ find enough said about it, in old traditions: which “ tell us (among other vague stuff) that some ancient “ churches practised it every day in the week. But in “ the

“ the oracles of God, we have no account how oft the
 “ apostles practised it. The Lord fixed no precise
 “ times : but left it to discretion : *As oft as ye drink it.*”
 There is at least a strong probability that this *old tradi-*
tion was first brought forth in the apostolic age ; and
 that the church at Jerusalem was one of those churches
 where it was for some time held : and if it reach this date
 it can be no worse of the age. In those ancient churches
 they continued as constantly in the *breaking of bread* as
 in teaching the *apostles doctrine*. *Act. ii. 42.* And our
 commentator knows from *Act. v. 42*, that “ The teach-
 “ ing and preaching of the doctrine of Christ, was
 “ a perpetual work.” What ever he means by a *perpetual*
work, there is no foundation for supposing, that the
breaking of bread was less frequently observed in the
 church at Jerusalem, or any other church of that age,
 than the teaching and preaching in them were. The
 teaching and preaching, *Act. v. 42.* do not appear to
 be only in the church, but where ever there was opportu-
 nity. But it is a most foolish thing in us to pretend this
 ordinance is *left to discretion*, as we see discretion ex-
 plained by practice, while we will not pretend to
 maintain that the ordinance of resting on the first day
 of the week is also left to discretion. We conclude from
Act. xx. 7. that it was the practice of the first churches
 to assemble for worship every first day of the week, and
 that their example is a rule to the churches of Christ to
 do the same till he come again ; yet this text leaves no
 more obligation upon the churches to assemble for wor-
 ship on that day, than it does for their assembling to *break*
bread. And if we can see it an ordinance of Christ, that
 his

Prop. 17 Mr. Johnson's Com. considered. 189

his churches assemble for *worshipping* him on that day *perpetually*; then we can also see it his ordinance, that they assemble to *break bread*, the solemnest part of his worship. Yea, and when we go about to shew our dislike of assembling to eat the Lord's supper every Lord's day, we then manifestly shew that our assembling constantly on that day is not in obedience to Christ, after the example of his first churches; but only a tradition we have received from our fathers. And it moreover carries in it an intimation that we do not rest the salvation of our souls barely on the death of Jesus.

Paul says to the Corinthians,—*when ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.* And let us think soberly on this text; and then say, If Paul is not making their *eating the Lord's Supper* the great end of their coming together.

His saying,——*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*, is not leaving the frequency of eating that bread, and drinking that cup to human discretion, but shewing that so often it is to be done in remembrance of the Lord, as he says, *For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* And do not
those

those words plainly import it to be the will of the Lord it should be done often, and that the church at Corinth did it often? But if those words, *as oft*, leave the frequency of the ordinance to the churches, then it can be in no other way but as often as ever it is in their power: And it is in their power as often as they can assemble to hear and teach the apostles doctrine, make the contribution, and offer their prayers and praises. The commentator's seeming to place the frequent observation of the Lord's supper, as mentioned in the Proposition, to the account of *old Traditions* can avail nothing with any one who is in earnest to know the practice of the first churches, under the inspection of the apostles, as they will easily perceive him under the influence of *modern tradition*, which we see directing its dupes to eat the Lord's supper once in the month, two months, three months, six months, or twelve months, as they reckon it suits their convenience and circumstances: or even as they see it most for their edification!

Let us now suppose the commentator, and his church, in the height of their discretion, should see it answer the purpose of their edification best, to have this ordinance once in seven years; or say, once in seven times seven: we could not say they were walking contrary to their own rule: And they would then be far enough out of the way of all tradition. But after all it is no less than a shame for us to be pretending a regard to the "oracles of God" when tradition has the sure government of our conduct.

Respecting the hour of eating the Lord's supper, he
observes,

observes, it is ridiculous to talk of supper-time; because that time is arbitrary.—Rather, this observation is the effect of ridiculous inattention, that does not perceive the Proposition making the time of eating the Lord's supper no less *arbitrary* than *supper-time*. And however arbitrary this time be, it is understood by every person, and in every country, to be late in the evening, or at night. However arbitrary this time was among the Jews it would seem it furnished them with an idea of some part of our evening. *Luk. xiv 17*. He further observes, that “It was along with, or immediately after, the eating “the passover. And this was an invariable rule with “the Jews, that every feast or sacrifice, to be performed on any particular day, must be so early as to be “finished before the sun was down: otherwise (as their “day began at even. *Lev. xxiii. 32.*) another day “would have commenced.” However much our commentator may be pleased with this criticism, it will not be found to do him any service: For it does not anywhere appear that the passover was eaten before the expiration of the day on which it was killed. It was appointed to be killed on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening (or between the two evenings) *Exo. xii. 6.* and to be eaten in the *Night* following. And we do not find from any subsequent account of this ordinance that the passover was eaten before Sunset. On the contrary, if the supper, *John 13.* was the paschal supper, which the commentator supposes, and which is very probable*, we are expressly told, when

* Compare *Mat. xxvi 21—26. Luk. xxii. 21—23. John, xiii. 21—30.*

Judas went from the table after receiving the sop, *it was night*. *John* xiii. 30. And Paul is no less express, *1 Cor.* xi. 23.—*the Lord Jesus, the NIGHT in which he was betrayed, took bread*: The conversation between Jesus and his disciples, *Luk.* xxii. 24—38. tho' narrated by Luke immediately after his account of their eating the passover, seems part of it to have happened before that time, *Mat.* xx. 20—28. *Luk.* xxii. 21—23. and part of it after. *Mat.* xxvi. 30—35. *Mark* xiv. 26—31. compared with *Luk.* xxii. 31—34. But however this be, except much more was spoken than is written, either in *Luk.* xxii. 34—38, or the five chapters in John, it could not take much time; however not so much as may be allowed, supposing the Sun was set before they sat down to supper. But as to the discourses *John* xiii. 14. and xv. xvi, xvii. they can no way affect the question; because, whether the first of these was at a *supper*, at the house of Simon the leper, two days before the passover *Mat.* xxvi. 6, 7. *Mar.* xiv. 3. or at the *passover-supper*, it was *night*, when they were at it, as before observed.

Whether we attend to the *Name* Paul gives this christian ordinance, *1 Cor.* xi. 20. the *import* of it, *1 Cor.* xi. 26. *Mat.* xxvii. 45, 46. *1 John.* ii. 8. the *time* of its institution *Mat.* xxvi. 20. *1 Cor.* xi. 23. or what we see of the *christian practice* after Christ's ascension, *Act.* xx. 7, 8. we shall still be directed, to observe it when the day is far spent, or at night.

P R O P. 18.

I know not what induced the commentator to speak of washing the saints feet, as if the Proposition represented

sented this action as a public ordinance in the church, like the Lord's supper. The author of the Proposition never understood it, nor heard of its being understood, in any such light. But the Lord enjoined it as expressly as he did the supper: *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.* He gave them the example that it should be continued among them. And if we can set aside this custom, observed in the first age of christianity, under a pretence of keeping to its import; we may on the very same account set aside every thing in the christian profession that appears to be figurative. We have got a respectable class of Christians who have thrown aside the christian institutions in general, from a conceit that they are abiding by the spirit and truth of them; to the reproach of the first Christians who knew no better than to practise them. And, from the same spirit of infidelity, we are ready to turn into a subject of indifference this peculiar commandment of the Lord, given to be a standing representation among his disciples of their humility in serving one another. And why? But because our superior wisdom, to the chief leader in christianity, has now discovered something of superstition in the frequent practice of it. This seems to appear from our saying, "And for as much as in those climates, and in the manner men frequently were shod; it became a necessary and almost constant practice." It may indeed be said, it is not so frequently a needful work in our age and country, as it was in the eastern countries, when the New Testament was written; and this is the force of all that can be said against it. Yet the disci-

ples of Christ may frequently have their feet wet and miry, and frequently hot and sweaty, in travelling to the church assemblies, and on other occasions, in our climate ; and so frequently as this happens it becomes needful, and is an acceptable work. It is manifest we have reason to suspect disaffection to the example of Christ, however we hear it extolled in words, when we find persons curious about this exercise for fear of imitating Christ to superstition. And there is no doubt (if it did not appear a little too bare-faced) but our great judgment and penetration could easily find superstition in one man's washing anothers feet ; for a man that is found in his limbs may as conveniently wash his own feet, as he can have it done by another. Our commentator gives us a glorious commendation of the instance in Jesus with one breath, and with the next a lively intimation of holding the frequent practice in contempt among his followers, who have got stockings and shoes to their feet.

But as Christ has thought proper to place this servile exercise among his disciples by his own example and command, those who regard him as their Lord and master, and the example and obedience of his first followers, can have no pretension to contrive excuses. Every excuse or opposition must come from the same spirit which appeared in Peter, *John. xiii. 8.*

As he has told us that "the Lord did not enjoin it "by express command ; as he did those ordinances "which pertain to the worship of his house ;" he should have shewn us what ordinances they are, which are more expressly commanded, and wherein that greater expressness appears.

P R O P. 19.

On the Kifs of charity used among the first Christians we have this notable observation: " But to confine it " to a carnal kissing of the mouth, is utterly too low " for a spiritual fraternity: and pours great contempt " upon the Holy Ghost, that he should give so many " directions about a thing so trifling;*" This may serve to shew us, to what an extravagant pitch of insolence the pretended admirers of the words of the Holy Ghost may attain even in the blaze of that admiration. For if such a meaning should be included in those passages which enjoin the holy Kifs as one would readily take to be intended, then the Holy Ghost is contemptible and trifling in giving so many directions about it. And to be sure he knows right well what was fit for the Holy Ghost to do in this case.—One would be apt to think that even the bare consideration of the many high sounding words which he has formerly expressed in favour of the Scripture,

* Who would take these words to come from the author of the comment on the *appendix*; and from the author of such words as these; " The infallible record " of God in his sacred word, is so profound, so sublime, so tremendous, that it ought to be attended to " with the utmost reverence and godly fear, &c." (Preface to *The two opinions tried*, pag. 25.) I cannot pretend to say how it may be with the reader in reflecting on the light these words, in conjunction with those cited from the comment, set the author in? but I must acknowledge I cannot help thinking of a harlot liberally praising chastity.

might have given a check to his arrogance. But must not the Holy Ghost also appear contemptible in leading the author of *the acts of the apostles*, to notice so frequently such a little trifling thing as occurs *Act. xviii. 18, 22. xx. 1, 37. xxi. 6, 7, 19.* Or have we got nothing but figures before us in all these places? For it seems the term is only figurative intending love, and fellowship; and this we may see fully imported in *2 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.* Did Paul then say the same thing over again in the 12th. verse that he had before said in ver. 11th.? Did he first speak plainly to them, and then lap it up in a figure? But “Kings and judges kiss the son who never saw him in the flesh. *“Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12.”* In this Psalm we see Kings and Judges called to *kiss the son*; and the reason given, is, *lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.* It is impossible that any reader should miss taking the kiss in the second Psalm in a metaphorical sense; and the low and contemptible herd of readers would never once imagine the five texts cited in the Proposition to be only figurative, unless such an imagination was put into their heads by a reader of refined taste: They would naturally take all the texts to require such a kiss as they frequently observe among their neighbours, on several occasions: and Paul seems to say that readers of this sort bid as fair for understanding the Scriptures as those who have been *ever learning* to read them, and to distinguish between things practical, and things ironical; between things metaphorical, and things categorical; between standing laws, and occasional directions; between things commanded, and things done by choice, &c.

But what reason may be alledged why a literal compliance with the apostolic injunction, in the five texts, should be utterly too low for a spiritual fraternity? Will it sink our character, and render us less reputable among our devout neighbours? Or do we fear it will make us look little in the view of the searcher of hearts? Our decent christian friends, before mentioned, insist, that such customs as one person's washing another in water, and eating bread and drinking wine together, in imitation of some figurative actions of old time, are things, now, utterly too low for spiritual brethren to practise; and we can treat them contemptuously, after the best things they can say, and esteem all as "mere phantoms of their own brains:*"—and yet we are not directed by tradition in reading the apostles. No no!

In *Rom.* xvi. Paul sends his salutations to many, by name, at Rome; also divers with him, both particular persons and churches, salute the Romans; but among all these salutations we have no mention of a *kiss*, with which he directs them to salute one another, whose correspondence was personal. The like is observable *1 Cor.* xvi. 19—21. *2 Cor.* xiii. 12, 13. *1 Pet.* v. 13, 14. But the texts which enjoin this expression of brotherly love are so express as to supersede reasoning on the subject.

There is not any reason for thinking that Judas would have made his kissing Jesus a sign for those sent

* See *Occasional review of the prebendary of Litchfield's sermon.* Pag. 38.

to apprehend him, if such a manner of salutation had not been commonly used by Christ and his disciples.

P R O P. 20.

It is here said, that “ No feast is commanded, only “ the Lord’s supper.” Where do we find an express command for keeping the first day of the week to the memory of Christ’s resurrection? Where do we find singing psalms in the church assembly commanded? Where do we find Christians commanded to pray in their families, and formally give thanks when they sit down to eat and drink? We have the example of the first followers of Christ, under the government of his Spirit, for the feasts which the Proposition speaks of: And we commonly say, we ought to take the apostles, and Christians of the first age, for our examples in things pertaining to the christian profession; and to esteem their *example* of equal force with what is expressly commanded; as being certain they practised nothing but what they received from the Lord. 1 Cor. xi. 1.

When Christ was risen from the dead, he convinced his disciples of the certainty of his resurrection in *eating* with them. This first happened to the two with whom he went to *Emmaus*. *Luke. xxiv. 30, 31. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. When these two returned to Jerusalem, they acquainted the eleven, and them that were with them, what things were done in the way, and how he was*

was known of them in breaking of bread. ver. 35. Jesus at the same time appeared in the midst of them; and we are told, ver. 41—43. While they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb. And he took it, and did eat before them. ver. 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. On this, Mark says, chap. xvi. 14. And afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, &c. And John mentions a third time that Jesus shewed himself unto his disciples, attended with the same circumstance of eating. John. xxi. 5. Then Jesus saith unto them, children, have ye any meat?—ver. 9. As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. ver. 12. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. ver. 13, 14. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

When the Holy Ghost was given to lead the apostles into all truth, that they might begin the New-Testament church order, and teach the disciples to observe all things, whatsoever Christ commanded them, we find this *eating* taken particular notice of, as a practice constantly observed by the first christian church: *Act. ii. 46. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, &c.*

And the Corinthian church, whom the apostle praises for keeping the traditions he delivered them, *1 Cor.*

xi. 2. (tho' he praises them not for their manner of observing them. ver. 17.) had among them, their *own supper* as well as the *Lord's supper*; and which it seems they also had the same day they came together to eat the Lord's supper. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21.

This custom appears to have been universally practised by the Christians towards the conclusion of the apostolic age*. *Jude. 12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: &c. 2 Pet. ii. 13. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you, &c.*

We are told, "*Act. ii. 46. proves no more than this, That in their going and returning, preaching, worshipping, or assembling; to whatever house they came, among the brethren, they were made welcome; being freely entertained, and cheerfully partook, without ceremony.*" This explanation seems to be something wild: It is, I think, much easier to take the meaning of the text, than the explanation. But one may some way perceive this *breaking bread* put upon a loose *occasional* footing in the explanation; whereas the text speaks of it as a *constant* custom: *And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, &c.*

* Peter's second epistle seems to have been written but a little before his decease. chap. i. 14, 15. And it is generally thought Jude wrote his epistle about the same time, or a little after, just before the destruction of Jerusalem.

On 1 Cor. xi. 21. the commentator says, "In what way that disorder had prevailed, is not clearly expressed, but it was something very unbecoming; therefore not a precedent to us." One would think there could be no occasion for observing, that the disorders which were in the church at Corinth are no precedents for us. But if the *things* about which these disorders happened be no precedents to us, then we may say that the Corinthians coming together into one place to eat the the Lord's supper is no precedent to us.

As to the disorders about these two suppers, they seem to be pointed out in the following particulars: (1) They stood charged with *divisions*, ver. 18. and this also appears in *every one taking before other his own supper*. (2) They are blamed for *neglecting the poor brethren*: while some were well refreshed and fed to the full, others were *hungry*, ver. 21. Those who had houses proper for these entertainments are sharply reprov'd, as despising the church and shaming the poor, in withholding them, ver. 22. *What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?* (3) They confounded their *own supper* with the *Lord's supper*, as making but little distinction, and taking them both in the same place, and at the same time: So, they are reprov'd for taking their own supper when they came together into one place to eat the Lord's supper, ver. 20, 21. *When ye therefore come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper.* And (4) we

we may also think whether Paul does not hint at something of *excess* when he says,—*another is drunken, or has well drunk?* We may also here remember the admonition in Jude. 12.—*feeding themselves without fear.*

Having fallen into divisions (chap. iii. 3, 4.) which introduced these disorders, they could not so well perceive the *unity* of the Lord's body, nor that spirit of charity by which it is animated.—Neglecting the poor, they could not so clearly perceive the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ who became poor to make many rich, and gave his body to be broken, that saving health might be bestowed on men.

So the apostle calls them to examine themselves, (ver. 28.) respecting their love to the brotherhood, in coming together, into one place, to eat of that bread and drink of that cup which was a representation of his body broken, and his blood shed for them. He intimates also, that a church eating the Lord's supper, is a representation of the *one body* of Christ; consisting of many members, joined together by one spirit. See chap. xii. And we may see, that this body of Christ, redeemed from among men by the broken body of the Lord, cannot be discerned by any one coming to eat of that bread not examining himself, how his heart stands affected in love to his brethren, with whom he eats of that bread, and to whom he is joined by the spirit of faith, shewing him that Christ loved his church and gave himself for it. Moreover, when we say the examination here called for respects being in the faith; according to 2 Cor. xiii. 5. We must also say, that brotherly love is the great proof of faith, 1 John ii. 9--11, and

and chap. iii. 10---16. except this be practised, there can be no true evidence of being in the faith; and without it, all pretensions to assurance, and great enjoyments of the love of God are mere delusion.

It must, then, be an injurious way of going to work with Paul's discourse to represent him as discouraging the Corinthians from keeping up their *own supper*, which was one peculiar means of cultivating brotherly love, without which all their gifts and experiences beside, would amount to NOTHING.

Now what remained for this church, after hearing this part of Paul's epistle to them, but to examine themselves of the truth of their love to one another, and so heal their divisions—to keep their *own supper* at home in their own houses, and feed their poor brethren—
And come together into one place to eat the Lord's supper, as one bread.

The commentator observes, that, “ Those hints, 2
“ *Pet. ii. 13. Jude. 12.* do not discover whether those
“ feasts were stated or occasional: Neither do they cast
“ any favourable countenance towards them. So then,
“ to pretend to follow them in this, is only to follow an
“ *Ignis Fatuus*; by a voluntary humility, and will-wor-
“ ship.” So much for voluntary humility and will-
worship! Which no doubt he has well considered.
Some have thought these feasts are mentioned, by Peter
and Jude, in so favourable a light, as should move us to
consider whether the apostles do not intend the Lord's
supper by them? Even as others are ready to take
Christ's washing his disciples feet for his baptizing
them. And why, may we think, should Peter and Jude
mock

mock those who should believe on the Lord, thro' their word, by holding out an *Ignis Fatuus* for them to follow : Or present their conversation in such language as, for us to pretend an imitation of them, would only be *voluntary humility* ? But what does our commentator see in those *hints*, that reflects on the feasts ? It seems to be *hinted*, that the admission of ungodly heretical men, to them, defiled them. This seems to be no way unfavourable to them.

But we need not wonder at his not being able to perceive whether those feasts were stated or occasional, when we see him at a stand about determining whether the Lord's supper is *stated* or *occasional*, and falling in with the occasional side of the question. Yet when we see the church at Jerusalem continuing stately in the observation of them, and the church at Corinth having them as stately as they had the Lord's supper ; and when we see that they took their rise from that *eating* in which the disciples were assured of the truth of the Lord's resurrection, in the night of that *same day* in which Jesus arose ; we can have no occasion to be complaining of an uncertain light, in order to excuse our compliance.

P R O P. 21.

It must be acknowledged the commentator makes some shew of regard to the doctrine of the Scripture on this head ; but it, nevertheless, appears, on the whole, that he stands on the same bottom with those who are more apparently chagrined with it. He indeed represents the covetous man as no Christian ; while yet he
screens

screens his Christians from the charge of covetousness, in "gathering earthly treasure," by supposing their *gathering* it may not be accompanied with "greediness," which supposition can no more stand before the words of Christ, *Mat. vi. 21.* than an image of wax can stand in a *fiery furnace*. He allows Christians the full liberty to "gather earthly treasure,——lay it up, "——and withhold it:" but he wants this gathering, laying up, and withholding, to be attended to in a right manner, viz. without greediness, anxiety, and penury; or, in a word, without covetousness! And thus we must learn to believe the words of Christ; which affirm that no man can gather, lay up, and withhold, without having his heart with that which he gathers, lays up, and withholds.

Christ indeed tells his disciples not to *care* with anxiety*: but he forbids gathering, and laying up treasures on earth altogether; and, in opposition thereto, enjoins laying up treasure in heaven, by giving alms; telling them their heart will be where their treasure is, whether *that* be in heaven or on earth. And we hear the rich man, *Luk. 12.* called a *fool*, not for proposing to lay up what providence hath brought him over and above his need, with "greediness" and "anxiety;" but for not selling it and giving alms, not knowing but his present day might be his last. Compare ver. 18. 33.

The Proposition needs not, I think, be more "explicit." It speaks against *treasuring up on earth* in any sense, or laboring to increase earthly riches, from any

* *Mat. vi. 25*———*34.*

motive. It hints at what a treasuring person may be ready to say in his heart, as, "I have children: I must provide them every one a little to begin the world with.—I, or mine, may come to be visited with sickness, against which time too it is prudent to provide.—Old age may overtake me; when I must live by what I may before lay up in store, &c.—It is wisdom to prepare for the worst." All who speak and act in this manner, are, in the Proposition, represented, as having more trust in uncertain riches than in the living God.

But it is not easy to infer from the Proposition, that a person who is rich, coming to believe the Gospel, is required immediately to become a poor man, by giving away all that he has in the world; and so to have *lack* himself, and put himself out of condition *to give to him that needeth*; while yet, it may be easily inferred that whatever his substance yields him above his living, is to be lent to the Lord, by giving it to the poor, and not treasured to himself to swell his substance. *1 Tim. vi. 8, 9.* But the author of the Proposition has nothing to say here about a "mite," nor yet a pound.

The comment refers to these two famous texts, well known to every covetous Christian, *2 Cor. xii. 14. 1 Tim. i. 8.*) for proof, that "There may be cases, in which a Christian may find it his duty to reserve in his hand "of the substance which God hath given him."

It must be every Christian's duty, in every station, to support himself, and his family, without being burdensome to others, if it be in his power: and I know not of any text of Scripture that requires him to give away any part of his substance necessary for enabling him to do
this,

this. If his substance, aided by industry, will produce much more than serves to maintain him and his dependants, the Proposition does not insinuate he is obliged to break into his *stock*, to make it less. It only insists for obedience to the Gospel, that is, whether it be much or little a Christian is able to produce by means of his substance and labor, over and above his food and raiment, he is to treasure that in heaven not on earth. The Proposition is against a man's increasing his *stock*, when it, with his own labor, is sufficient to serve his wants: but it hints nothing concerning his diminishing it. This is a subject the Proposition does not meddle with.

But as the Scriptures are considered at large on the subject of this Proposition, in *a Plea for pure and undefiled religion*; and, *an answer to some objections, moved by a friend, against the Plea**, it seems needless to say any thing further here. I shall therefore only quote what is said in the Plea on the two texts referred to in the comment, for proof, that there are cases, in which a Christian may find it his duty to reserve in his hand, &c.

“ —————so covetousness, which has a peculiar
“ influence to blind the mind, has induced men to
“ endeavour to overthrow the scope of the foresaid dis-
“ courses of our Lord, and to plead to that purpose
“ some texts of the New Testament.

“ As, *first*, We shall hear 1 *Tim.* v. 8. insisted on,

* See *Glas's Works*, Vol. 3. pag. 71——175.

“ as if the apostle were there declaring him worse than
 “ an infidel, and a denier of the faith, who doth not
 “ provide for his family and children, by laying up for
 “ them treasures on the earth, to make them live com-
 “ fortably (as they reckon comfort) after he is taken
 “ from them, and to keep them from being burden-
 “ some to others.

“ According to this gloss on the apostle's words, if
 “ any man had hearkened to the Lord's discourses on
 “ covetousness, or to John Baptist calling for fruits
 “ meet for repentance, he could not have been saved,
 “ especially he in whom Jesus Christ put covetousness
 “ to the greatest trial, if he had done what he was
 “ called to, would have been worse than an infidel,
 “ and denied the faith; and the apostles did very ill
 “ in suffering the members of the church in Jerusalem
 “ to become worse than infidels, and deny the faith,
 “ by going far beyond what has been pleaded from our
 “ Lord's discourses. Yea, it will be hard, according
 “ to this sense of the text, to find one among the Chris-
 “ tians, of whom we read in the New Testament as true
 “ followers of Christ, who did not deny the faith, and
 “ was not worse than an infidel: for it will not be easy
 “ to find one among them laying up treasures on earth
 “ for himself, or for his children after him.

“ But it will be manifest to them who look on this
 “ text with any singleness, that it is rather strong against
 “ covetousness and for almsgiving. The apostle, in that
 “ passage, is on the subject of the relief of desolate wid-
 “ ows, which he calls honour, as he also calls that
 “ which is bestowed for the support of the elders; and
 “ he

“ he says, 1 Tim. v. 4. *But if any widow have children*
“ *or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home,*
“ *and to requite their parents : for that is good and accept-*
“ *able before God.* And after the description of a wi-
“ dow indeed, ver. 5. 6. he says, ver. 7. *And these*
“ *things give in charge, that they may be blameless ; and*
“ ver. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and speci-*
“ *ally for those of his own house, (or, and especially those of*
“ *the household,) he hath denied the faith, and is worse*
“ *than an infidel.* From thence he continues on the
“ subject of widows, to ver. 16. where he says, *If any*
“ *man or woman that believeth, have widows, let them*
“ *relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it*
“ *may relieve them that are widows indeed.* From all
“ this it plainly appears, that he is so far from calling
“ parents to make rich, and lay up stocks for their
“ children, that, on the contrary, he is pressing the
“ children or nephews of poor widows to be charitable
“ first at home in providing maintenance for them. This
“ he commends as *piety to their own house,* where they
“ should do alms in the first place ; and he commends
“ it likewise as justice or gratitude, *to requite their pa-*
“ *rents,* who provided food and cloathing for them,
“ when they could not do it for themselves. Then he
“ declares, that they who neglect this piety to their
“ own, especially if these be of the household of faith,
“ do in effect deny the faith, which obliges us to much
“ more almsgiving than that comes to, and which will
“ make us outdo infidels, Jews or Gentiles, in alms-
“ deeds; yea, he is worse than these infidels, who neglects
“ this: for, whatever principle they do it from, they take

“ care of their own poor parents, and relieve their def-
 “ titute relations. The *providing* here spoken of, can-
 “ not be laying up stocks, or making rich in this
 “ world: for who imagines that children or nephews
 “ are obliged to provide in this manner for their
 “ poor widows, and to requite their parents in this
 “ way? And in the same sense wherein it can be said
 “ that these desolate widows must be provided for by
 “ their children or nephews, these same children or
 “ nephews ought to provide for their own children; as
 “ they requite their parents, for the care they took of
 “ them, by relieving them with the necessaries of life,
 “ so let them take care of their own children till they
 “ be able to do for themselves.

“ This is all that can be made of this text by conse-
 “ quence, concerning provision for our children; for
 “ it speaks not directly on that subject. And could it
 “ be believed that any man who had eyes in his head,
 “ would gravely plead this passage in favour of study-
 “ ing to better our condition in this world, and to
 “ make rich in it, instead of making rich towards God?
 “ Yet there are men in the Christian world, who will
 “ readily plead this text for laying up stocks to their
 “ children, and practise accordingly with great industry,
 “ whose practice, at the same time, declares they see
 “ nothing in this text, that should hinder them to live
 “ in the scandalous neglect of this piety toward their
 “ poor parents, and other destitute near relations;
 “ even as others can see nothing in the Gospel that
 “ hinders them to make money as fast as they can, and
 “ then feed their vanity and luxury with it, let come
 “ of

“ of the desolate widows and their own children what
“ will. Yea, we may hear words of Scripture brought
“ for the pride of life, and for drunkenness and forni-
“ cation, as well as for covetousness: and it may be a
“ question, if it be altogether consistent with that awful
“ respect due to the words of God, to be at pains to
“ refute these profane turns upon the Gospel: yet, be-
“ cause some seriously insist on them, to the hardening
“ of themselves and others in a thing that tends to their
“ destruction, we may take some notice of another text
“ that is brought to the same purpose with the fore-
“ going; and that is,

“ 2 Cor. xii. 14. where the apostle says to the Co-
“ rinthians, *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to*
“ *you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not*
“ *yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for*
“ *the parents, but the parents for the children.* From this
“ text it is alledged, that the Gospel lays it on parents,
“ as their duty, or at least allows them, to lay up trea-
“ sures on earth, and make stocks for their children, as
“ they are able.

“ But as the apostle is here plainly pursuing another
“ scope, and this comes only as a similitude applied to
“ that scope; one would think it is not very fair deal-
“ ing with the Scripture, to oppose this to whole dis-
“ courses treating the subject expressly, and of set pur-
“ pose. That this is the common practice in the nations
“ of this world, is as certain as it is certain there are
“ unjust stewards and judges, that neither fear God,
“ nor regard man, from whom the Gospel takes simili-
“ tudes for our instruction; but they can be no further
“ applied

“ applied by us, than the Gospel applies them, nor are
 “ we warranted to put them to any other use beside
 “ what it makes of them. And unless it can be made
 “ appear, that the Scripture makes every thing lawful
 “ to us, which it uses as a type, and from which it takes
 “ a similitude, the plea from this text, for laying up
 “ treasures on the earth for our children, must be very
 “ weak.

“ And if it were the design of this text, to command
 “ parents to lay up for their children, by the same rule
 “ it must be understood to discharge the children to lay
 “ up for the parents: but as the Scripture elsewhere
 “ requires parents to take care of and bring up their
 “ children, so it shews that children, when able for it,
 “ ought, in piety and grateful requital, to provide for
 “ their parents, as in the passage before considered.
 “ The patrons of the covetousness that is condemned
 “ in the Gospel, must therefore reconcile this text with
 “ the former, which they chiefly insist on, before they
 “ can make any thing out of it for their purpose.

“ And it is evident, that *laying up*, in this text, can
 “ signify no other sort of laying up, but that which the
 “ Corinthians should have done for Paul, if he had
 “ been burdensome to them, in taking from them as he
 “ took from other churches. And what kind of laying
 “ up was that? Were the churches laying up treasures
 “ on earth to make the apostles rich in this world?
 “ Or, were they not providing only for their necessities,
 “ as the poorest parents are every where doing for their
 “ children, and as all ought to do who are in no capa-
 “ city to make rich?

“ It

“ It is no less evident, that the apostle, who speaks
“ of himself here as a parent to his children in the
“ faith, did not walk with his other children, accord-
“ ing to this rule that he here lays down for the Co-
“ rinthians : for they were inferior to other churches
“ in this, that he took not relief from them as he did
“ from these. His children in Philippi, particularly,
“ provided for him, as he will not here allow the Co-
“ rinthians his children to do, for this reason, *Because*
“ *the children ought not to lay up for the parents ;* and
“ yet the Philippians are more highly commended for
“ walking contrary to this Corinthian rule, *Phil. iv.*
“ *14—18.* than the Corinthians seem to be in this
“ passage.

“ But when we consider how the apostle asserts to
“ this same church his right to be maintained by them,
“ as well as others, and so to live of the Gospel, *1 Cor.*
“ *chap. ix. ;* and when we observe that this church
“ took more pressing to raise charity from them, and
“ were not so forward in it as other churches ; and
“ when we also take notice, that the apostle's adver-
“ saries easily influenced them against him, by insinu-
“ ations of his being ready to make a gain of them,
“ whereby it appears they had more of an air of co-
“ vetousness than any other churches, we may easily
“ perceive that he is here insinuating a heavy reflec-
“ tion on them, in giving the reason why he will take
“ nothing from them, in opposition to his adversaries,
“ who were ready to catch them on this point. In
“ this view of the case, these words, *The children ought*
“ *not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the*
“ *children*

“ *children*, seem rather to be the language of the apostle’s
 “ adversaries at Corinth, to which the Corinthians
 “ gave a ready ear; especially seeing we find him, in
 “ the context, using their words so as crafty politicians
 “ about religion have fathered them upon the apostle
 “ himself, and pleaded them as his words, to counte-
 “ nance them in that which they call *holy guile* ! ver.
 “ 16. *Being crafty, I caught you with guile*. Satan,
 “ who was making use of the judaizing teachers at
 “ Corinth, against the apostle’s ministry, knew well
 “ the weak side of these Corinthians, soothed their co-
 “ vetousness, and misrepresented the apostle as seeking
 “ to make a gain of them; and these instruments of
 “ Satan took care not to be burdensome to them,
 “ while they got their ready ear to their saying, with
 “ a reflection on the apostle, their father in Christ, *The*
 “ *children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the pa-*
 “ *rents for the children*. To vindicate himself, and
 “ chastise them for being so easily imposed on by the
 “ soothers of their covetousness, he tells them he had
 “ not been, and was resolved not to be burdensome to
 “ them; and makes use of one of the sayings of these
 “ teachers to which they gave ear, as if it were a rea-
 “ son why he made them inferior to other churches, in
 “ not receiving from them what was otherwise really
 “ his due.”

APPENDIX.

The apostle James says, *AA. xv. 21.*—For *Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read*

in the synagogues every Sabbath day. He gives this as a reason for writing to the Gentiles to confirm them in their liberty from the Jewish law; and he plainly intimates that it was to be read constantly, that they might rejoice in their liberty*, as Moses was constantly read every Sabbath day to the Jews that they might bear the law † and be put in mind of the necessity of obedience. This being the first part of the New-Testament Scripture committed to writing, to be kept in the churches‡, and read in them as Moses was in the synagogues; the same thing must be said of the rest, as being equally necessary for the comfort || and establishment ** of the disciples: And therefore we see a charge given for reading Paul's epistles ††; and a blessing pronounced on him that readeth and they that bear the Revelation of Jesus Christ ††. The apostles wrote that their doctrine and practice might be kept in remembrance after their decease ||||; and that they, tho' dead, might still speak for God, and defend his truth. And however highly we incline on the one hand to esteem our noted preachers, wondered after by numbers; or, on the other, those we have learned to call able ministers of the New Testament, whom the noisy multitude have taken for men of more forbidding address; it must after all be said, that every one who enters into the kingdom of God comes to the faith thro' the apostles preaching. +

* Act. xv. 31. † Gal. iv. 21. Act. xiii. 15. ‡ Act. xvi. 4. || John xiv. 26. 2 Cor. i. 4. ** Act. xvi. 5. †† Col. iv. 16. 1 Thes. v. 27. †† Rev. i. 3. |||| 2 Pet. i. 15. + John xvii. 20. Isa. lii. 7, 8, 9. Rom. x. 14, 15, 16.

The Old-Testament Scriptures which testified before hand of Christ's sufferings and the glory following them*, and which are made *more sure* to us, and infallibly explained, by the New Testament†, are also commanded to be read in the churches‡, for the patience, comfort, and learning of those who believe ||.

These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. Rev. xi. 4. Zech. iv. 14.

I have no notion that "the ministers of Christ," by means of taking a "liberty" of their own, can indeed read the Scriptures to more "edification," than when they are read from the beginning of each book streight forwards to the end of it, as it has pleased the Holy Ghost to indite it; and as Moses and the Prophets were read in the synagogues; and as the epistle from Jerusalem to Antioch, and Paul's epistle to the Colossians, and his epistle to the Thessalonians, were ordered to be read. And those who find salvation in the Scripture, the words of eternal life, need be under no concern whether this method be called a "human prescription;" or it get some other name from those who despise it. We can be at no loss to know that in reading the Scripture no part is to be omitted; (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) but we have no more direction how much of the Scripture shall be read at one time, than we have about the length of the prayers, praise, exhortation and doctrine.

* 1 Pet. i. 11. † 2 Pet. i. 19, 29, 21. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 13. || Rom. xv. 4.

1pp.

fore
ving
alli-
om-
nce,

and-

4.

by
deed
when
ight
Holy
were
rusa-
ians,
to be
ture,
cern
ipti-
spise
the
16.)
crip-
the
ine.

. iv.